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ABSTRACT

This document contains 29 papers and 7 roundtable presentations from a Canadian conference on the study of adult education. The following papers are among those included: "Cultivating Knowledge" (Mike Ambach); "Subsistence Learning" (Rose Barg); "Non-Governmental Organizations and Popular Education Programs" (Bijoy P. Barua); "The Learning Organization" (Maureen S. Bogdanowicz, Elaine K. Baily); "Learning in Later Life" (Margaret Fisher Brillinger, Carole Roy); "Postcards from the Edge" (Shauna Butterwick, Michael Marker); "The Reading Strategies of Adult Basic Education Students" (Pat Campbell, Grace Malicky); "Feminist Artist-Educators and Community Revitalisation" (Darlene E. Clover); "Lifelong Learning in the New Economy" (Jane Cruikshank); "Contribution a la Reflexion Andragogique sur 'L'Economie du Savoir'" (Francine D'Ortun); "Adult Literacy as Social Relations" (Richard Darville); "Learning to Change" (John Egan); "Global Adult Education, Justice and Spirituality" (Leona English); "Dimensions of Spirituality" (Tara Fenwick, Leona English, Jim Parsons); "Canadian Research in Adult Education in the 1990s" (Tara Fenwick, Shauna Butterwick, Shahrzad Mojab); "The Parent They Knew and the 'New' Parent" (Linda Furlini); "Being, Becoming, and Belonging as a Queer Citizen Educator" (Andre P. Grace); "A Search for Sustainable Livelihoods within Global Marketplaces" (Carolyn Jongeward); "Re-Membering and Re-Picturing Activist Mothers" (Dorothy A. Lander); "Spirituality as a Sustaining Dimension of the Transformational Learning Process" (Maureen McCallum); "The Impact of Globalization on Human Rights" (Derek Mulenga); "Creating New

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Stories" (Mark Murphy, Brenda-Morgan Klein); "Graduate Students' Perspectives on Adult Education" (Tom Nesbit, Edward W. Taylor); "Les Nouveaux du Travail et de la Carriere" (Danielle Riverin-Simard); "The Pitfalls and Possibilities of Labour Movement-Based E-Learning" (Peter H. Sawchuk); "Enlightenment and Engagement in Adult Education for Democratic Citizenship" (Daniel Schugurensky); "Agency in the Knowledge Society" (James Sharpe); "Community Sustainability and Lifelong Learning" (Jennifer Sumner); "The Experience of Story Telling" (Debra Whitman); "Spaces for Community Development" (Pramila Aggarwal, Bill Fallis, Bob Lucker); "Academic Adult Education and the Vocation of Intellectual Work" (Jane Dawson); "Facilitating More Servant Leadership and Stewardship" (Kathleen Dodman-Kevany); and "The Master's Tools" (Budd L. Hall, Maria Turner). Most papers contain substantial bibliographies. (MN)

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# 20th Anniversary Conference of Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education

May 25-27, 2001

**Laval University, Quebec**

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Proceedings edited by:
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**20th Anniversary Conference of**
**Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education**

May 25-27, 2001
**Laval University, Quebec**

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# Cultivating Knowledge:
# Learning and Transformation in Community Supported Agriculture

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**Abstract**: A needs-centered approach in adult education and a technicist view of learning as the gaining of knowledge capital fail to recognize the possibility of situated knowledge in social change. Community supported agriculture serves as site to explore this.

## Thought for Food

The typical article of food on a North American's plate travels about 1,300 km to get there, which is something like a tenfold increase in the past 50 years. The energy in calories that goes into preserving, packaging, and transporting the food item may far exceeded the energy in calories that goes into the person who eats it, the ratio being as high as 10:1 (Imhoff, 1996). An interesting bit of trivia, this serves as a barometer of just how non-localized our society has become, at least with regards to the most basic components of life: the food we eat. This reflection led me to question: how does the way we relate to our food system reflect our attitudes about the environment, sustenance, and well being?

In Canada we have a year-round variety of produce from around the world. This is made possible by technological advances in production, transportation, and preservation, as well as by the momentum of the global economy itself. That such an infrastructure be considered the fruit of progress is a matter of some critique (Shiva, 1991; Lehman and Krebs, 1996) but such critical inquiry only rarely speaks (or is enabled to speak) beyond its own discourse. More constructively, we can look to practices that not only share the critique, but also embody alternatives. Such sites may help understand how a critical theory and social transformation might connect.

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is one such site. CSA is a system of partnerships between small-scale organic produce farmers and local "sharers" who partake in "the risks and rewards" of farming. Farms are typically located on the periphery of urban areas where the members live. At the beginning of the season, members contribute a sum of money to go towards the farmers' operating expenses and in return they receive a quantity of organic produce every week for 20-30 weeks of the year. The food is distributed through drop-off points in the city. Clients forego shopping and choosing from an international variety of produce: what the farm produces that week, they eat[1] . CSA fosters the viability of small farmers through partnership with urban dwellers and aims to bring social responsibility into localized economic activity.

In theory, CSA puts the focus on community and connection to local space as a source of nourishment. It offers a critical view of the cycle of production-consumption in a globalized marketplace. It can further be seen to address how humans relate to the food system through consumer and social participation. By foregoing the options of choice, convenience, competitive shopping, and price[2] , participants reject some basic values of consumer participation.

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[1] Of course, nothing is to stop people from supplementing organic farm food with trips to the supermarket.

[2] The biological produce offered by CSA is generally cheaper than store bought-food, but still more expensive than food offered at the supermarket.

Two other components of CSA are quite striking. First, members are encouraged - in some cases, contractually obliged - to voluntarily come out to help with the harvest from time to time. The dichotomy of "obligatory... voluntary" does not go unnoticed; rather, it constitutes a different perspective towards consuming, one that seeks to re-introduce social responsibility into the consuming of natural resources. This element is not shared by all CSA farms, some of which opt for a more client-producer relationship. Second, the reality of seasonal rather than yearlong abundance and eventualities such as bad weather leading to a poor harvest - considered drawbacks within a conventional market system - are recast as values; by accepting the consequences of the environment, people are enabled to identify with it. In simpler terms, it allows for people to connect to their environment through experiencing its nature. This is the theory, at any rate. Research that demonstrates if and how such transformation in attitude occurs within CSA is only beginning, though what has been done strongly recommends that these areas be explored, while cautioning for critical reflection in the research process.

**The Strange Fruit of Human Capital**

Beyond the CSA model, the organic farm itself provides a frame for activities that consciously seek to integrate ecological philosophy, situated knowledge, and "sustenance work"[3], all of which can be seen as marginalized discourses in the dominant paradigm of increased productivity of knowledge as a commodity. It is worth pointing out that human capital theory - the idea that the quality of people's knowledge determines their social and economic well being - was in part founded on a Theodore Schultz's view of agriculture as the "economy of being poor" (1981, p.3). Schultz's description of the human-nature relationship reveals much about his theory's ideological base: "Nature is host to thousands of species that are hostile to the endeavors of farmers. Nature, however, can be *subdued* by knowledge and human abilities" (p.17, italics added).

Human capital theory has evolved since Schultz. Recognizing the problem of measuring both the inputs (human knowledge) and the outputs (social and economic well being, the distinction rarely questioned), the OECD (1996) has sought to redefine human capital to show its utility rather than its character. Here, human capital is "the knowledge that individuals acquire during their life and use to produce goods services or ideas in market or non-market circumstances" (p. 22). This definition is supposed to "focus on two issues: i) the productive capacity arising from knowledge, and ii) the utility of improving the methods for assessing the productive capacity of human capital" (p. 23). This suggests a system that is attuned to a flux of factors in human capital, rather than one that sets out to explicate how, exactly, it works. The focus has shifted from quantifying knowledge capital through formal systems to accounting for its productive potential in fluid, interactive systems. What is important is to stay ahead of the game, not to understand its rules. Furthermore, "Although human capital is always owned by the individual or team that possess the competence, it is possible to define contracts in which the benefits due to acquiring such competence is in the hands of the lender..." (p.50). To this end, learning must produce marketable knowledges or competencies. Such an approach has been conveniently woven into life-long learning as adaptation to change, to the mixed responses of adult educators.

Rich and varied literature from adult education (Stein, 1998), environmental education (Orr, 1992; Donahue, 1994, Jorgensen, 1993), CSA and social movement theory (Imhoff, 1996;

[3] A term used by Hart (1993) to describe work that does not serve to underpin lifelong learning as a means to increasing productivity in a competitive global knowledge market.

Cohen, 1985), geography (McTaggart, 1993), community development (Dorfman, 1998), and literary essay (Berry, 1970) attest to the presence of an alternative practice of *situated* learning leading to qualitatively different knowledge. Such a presence offers three challenges: 1) An alternative to the limitations of technicist-empirical educational research; 2) A contrast to knowledge-as-commodity presented by human capital theory; 3) An objection to adult educators who seek to define their "clients" as "needy". A deeper reflection on these three challenges follows.

**Learning the Environment**

Learning at an organic CSA farm can be related to numerous research areas: environmental education, situated learning, social movement theory, bioregionalism, paradigm shift, and praxis. Material published by the CSA networks is largely promotional or instructional (Rowley, Tamsyn, and Beeman, 1994; Van En; 1992; Équiterre, 2000). Some writers link CSA to critical theory in development and globalization (Getz, 1995) or analyze its consumer benefits (Cooley and Lass, 1998) while various studies from sociological perspectives look at gender roles and participation (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990; Meares, 1997; DeLind and Ferguson, 1999). Research in social movement theory (Cohen, 1985) points to reciprocity among diverse life activities - economic, social, leisure - that characterize new social movements.

Literature on environmental education (Donahue, 1994; Zelezny, 1999; Chawla, 1999) holds that natural spaces have much potential to make learning meaningful. Research on using gardens as a site for learning (Rahm, forthcoming; Mabie & Baker, 1996) suggests that science may made relevant and authentic for learners, inviting them to *create* rather than *consume* a curriculum while stimulating dialogue to develop an environmental ethic. Though talk of *environmental literacy* exists in academic writing (Orr, 1992), it is practically absent from adult education research.

A recurring theme in this literature, one that is accompanied by a broad and evolving theory, is *bioregionalism*. McTaggart (1992) presents bioregionalism as a model consisting of three sub-systems: the biophysical (nature), the inhabiting (people and their infrastructures), and the network (economic and political ideologies). McTaggart suggests that ideological components have a tendency to dominate and displace the knowledge of biophysical processes, severing accountability among the three sub-systems. More than a simple iteration of environmental credos within the existing paradigm, a bioregional approach calls for "...a re-examination by human groups - human communities - of the way in which they have collectively structured their forms of differentiation... to dissolve the antagonistic differentiation which characterizes our common relations with the biological-physical environment" (p. 314). In a less academic vein, Wendell Berry (1970) suggests that

> The discipline proper to agriculture, which survives not just by production but also by the return of wastes to the ground, is not economics but ecology. And ecology may well find its proper disciplines in the arts, whose function is to refine and enliven perception, for ecological principle, however publicly approved, can be enacted only upon the basis of each man's perception of his relation to the world. (p.100).

There emerges a strong set of ideas about what tack research should take. A reliance on a positivist-empiricist framework has inherent limitations and more constructivist and

phenomenological approaches are called for. At the same time, ownership and control of research are not mere pragmatic or even ethical concerns; they are central to the social movements concerned with situated "grass roots" knowledge. We are led to question how, where, and for what purposes knowledge is created and validated. The potential is for highly self-reflective research to inform learning processes that go beyond knowledge as an empirically measurable and compartmentalized pursuit, suggesting instead knowledge as a locally-rooted value-actions, as critically informed *living*.

**Knowledge on the Organic Farm**

Having participated just a small degree in CSA, I have a few reflections about what shapes the knowledge of an organic farm. To begin with, much of the knowledge of its operation is passed down intergenerationally. A farmer once explained to me how the task of starting a farm is facilitated when the knowledge is "in the family"; in addition to farming know-how, family ties allow for the sharing of material resources, services, produce, seeds, and space. Cooperation among farmers seems to be an intrinsic element of farm operation. Second, the CSA farm has a tendency is to grow only to a certain size. Most farms get up to between 100 and 200 sharers; any more and the partnership starts to lose the sense of community that is necessary to maintain the commitment to the CSA model. In certain cases, CSA farms have limited or even shrunk their membership when things get too big. Third, as organic farms do not use pesticides or insecticides they are more subject to the effects of the nature. The climate, insects, etc. simply must be contended with. For example, the summer of 2000 was exceptionally cool and humid in Quebec and tomato crops suffered a blight. As a result, most of the sharers received no organic tomatoes. Tomatoes on non-organic industrial farms were also affected, but the conventional consumer didn't notice much difference because imports filled the space. In bioregional terms, an ideology of cooperation bears out social structures (small local economies) that encourage adaptation to the biophysical region.

None of this is the case with large agribusiness farms. The knowledge is largely managerial and technological and can be passed on through more formal training. As well, industrial agriculture's growth is not limited by social factors. In fact, increased growth, productivity, and profitability are all recommended for the viability of agribusiness in a competitive global market. Third, the vagaries of the climate and insects are aggressively countered by chemicals, preservatives, and increasingly, biotechnology. As well, the structure of agribusiness and the food distribution system insulate consumers from the realities of the biophysical system. The dominant discourse favours ideologies (economic neo-liberalism, growth and competition) that bear out social structures (the global food distribution service) to the continued marginalization of experiencing biophysical processes (the possibly adverse effects of climate). All of this has the effect of rendering obsolete the knowledge processes of the small organic farm.

And we may ask "so what?" Few people bemoan the marginalization of the horse and buggy as a means of transportation these days. This is also knowledge that has become largely obsolete. To answer this, we might remember that "the small organic farm" is a microcosm of the entire 10,000-year legacy of human agriculture prior to about the last 50 years. Aside from the question of the loss of biodiversity, lifestyle, and heritage, the organic CSA farm appears as an alternative ideology *and* practice to that of human capital theory, wherein knowledge is necessarily a transposable global commodity.

## Implications for Adult Education

The insights from situated learning, social movements, and environmental education parallel the concerns for a post-modern research ethic for adult educators (Usher, Bryant, and Johnston, 1997; Dyer, 1993). The re-examination of perceptions through any activity (learning on an organic farm, for example) does not exclude the researcher, whose research is at once a text that speaks to a particular academic culture, subjectively relates personal experience, and purports to convey some valid knowledge. A research "subject" that rejects the scientific-empiricist view of learning as a process of gaining knowledge capital for productivity is a challenge for the researcher. And here it must be clarified that the challenge is more than one of pragmatics ("how to go about collecting the data"); it is a challenge of situating the researcher as a "narrator and naratee" who affects the knowledge through the choices made. What is to be considered data? Who decides this? What is not being considered? What power is assumed by the researcher through the methodology chosen?

Kastner (1993) poses similar questions in her exploration of the knowledge systems of social movements, concluding that adult educators need to define their limits and roles lest they set themselves up as agents of "unwitting manipulation and disempowerment of the people... intended [to be] served" (p. 142). Similar cautions have swirled about the heels of participatory action research (Rahneema, 1990; Hall, 1982) and critical ethnography (Dyer, 1993). Zackarakis-Jutz (1996) identifies the irony of how adult educators ignore the corporate-led disempowerment of rural farming communities in Iowa, instead "applying inane bandages" according to a blind faith in the pairing of education and economic development.

For me, it is adult education's attachment to the identifying of learner needs that predisposes it towards the supplying of "inane bandages". This tendency runs deep, despite well-argued critiques of the "perpetual deficiency" of needs manufacturing. A needs-mentality mis-orients adult educators to the potential of community-supported agriculture and new social movements in general. Rather than bemoaning what they do not have (knowledge "capital"), the people involved may be celebrating what they do have, seeing their resources (including themselves) as adequate to the demands of their own values and aspirations. Encouraged to continually assess our needs relative to a growth-oriented economy, we may instead begin to question the criteria that make orientation to growth a preference.

## Conclusion

In my ongoing research within CSA, I try to keep these ideas in mind. The malaise increasingly expressed by adult educators concerned with social change - alluded to in this conference's theme - is a curious one. Adult education has been in the spotlight for several years. Delighted to see its reflection in every learning event around, its theoretic framework has expanded in all directions. As the center - the philosophical roots - predictably fall out, adult educators may find themselves "recovering stories". Lest this imply that adult education somehow holds a patent on creating emancipatory learning, I would say that it never did; emancipatory learning created adult education. Or they have been creating each other, at least until recently. The challenge is for adult education to recognize the limitations of its accumulated ideological baggage and become involved as a genuine participant in the learning of its diverse environments. Finally, if adult educators do not take on this challenge, then it is likely that other groups will.

> Communities can only be built by focusing on the strengths and capacities of the citizens who call that community home. Those who have escaped the lures of deficiency, therefore, have been drawing up a new map based on old truths, an 'Assets Map'... At the center of the map, and of the community building process, lie the 'gifts' of individual residents, their knowledge, skills, resources, values, and commitments. (Kretzman cited in Dorfman, 1998, p.5).

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# Subsistence Learning: an Artful Look into Motherwork as a Site of Learning

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**Abstract**: This paper explores the learning and knowledge creation that takes place within the lived experience of motherwork, through art-informed inquiry. Using storytelling and creative writing that includes poetic narrative as well as reflective poetry, I examine motherwork as a site of subsistence learning.

Women, throughout the world, do a disproportionate amount of motherwork (Waring, 1988, Miles, 1996). At the same time, patriarchal society has subordinated women, institutionalized motherhood and mandated that only mothers should do this work. Yet women's lived experience of mothering often contradicts the mainstream notion of what this work "is" or "should be" (Rich, 1986). This contradiction continues to subordinate women and is recognized in the increasing discourse regarding the work of mothering among the social sciences (Eichler, 1997, Thorne, 1992). However, motherwork as a site of learning, where subsistence work takes place, remains largely overlooked by theories of adult education and learning (Hart, 1992, 1995).

## Adult Learning as Change

Adult educators link learning to change and transformation for individuals as well as for society. At the personal level, change involves a cyclical process that includes experience, reflection, conceptualization and action (Kolb, 1984). Personal transformation often begins with a disorienting dilemma, which subsequently evolves. This process includes critical reflection, self-examination, and a reorientation that results in action (Mezirow, 1991). In order to effect change in society, adult educators also recognize that goals of transformation are embodied in the day to day lives of people who challenge existing oppressive structures of society (Youngman, 1996). Therefore, a pedagogy of change must link personal agency to public effectiveness (Maher, 1987).

## Research Design

This paper explores self-identified moments of learning that take place within lived experience, through art-informed inquiry. The focus is on moments of change in women's lives that involve their work as mothers. Research questions include: What are the epistemological foundations of the lived experience and learning within motherwork? What knowledge creation takes place within this work? In what ways can the knowledge creation that takes place within this work contribute to hope for the future? How can I present my work and findings in ways that are reflective and mindful of the arts and capture the emotions of readers?

Through self-inquiry and women's storytelling, I explore turning point moments that take place in the intensive work of providing primary care to children. In exploring the processes and the products of learning, women's experiences are examined in the context of their positions within society, taking into consideration interlocking issues of gender, race and class.

Currently, art-informed methods of research, including creative writing and poetry

are becoming a recognized part of ethnographic data analysis. In addition, feminist poets have made a convincing link between poetry and its relationship to women's lived experience, oppression and subordination (Lorde, 1984). Because of its truth telling nature, poetry and creative writing have the capacity to convey meaning to readers that is intuitive, powerful and prophetic (Denzin, 1997). In order to present research findings in ways that honour the wholeness of women's stories, capture their intensity, and appeal to the emotions of readers, I represent findings in art-informed ways that include poetic narrative, which builds on what Glesne (1999) identified as poetic transcription. To do this, the words and phrases from the original transcripts are woven into poetic pieces in an effort to maintain storytellers' voices, while representing the work as creative writing.

**Self-Inquiry**

To begin the research, I conducted an extensive self-inquiry into my own experience as a mother. In keeping with feminist research practices, this experience assisted me to gain a greater level of self knowledge, to empathize with the experience of research participants, and to work towards reducing the hierarchical relationship between myself and participants (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). I shared both my experiences and the poetic representations of my self-inquiry with research participants. Here is an excerpt of one of the poetic narratives that resulted from this self-inquiry project. I use a right hand margin to show how this experience caused me to push against the boundaries of what I had understood the work of mothering to require of me.

*Excerpt from: My Homework*

*...my fear was*
*sexual abuse*
*of little girls....*

*I felt I was bad*
*confronting authority figures.*

*I'd been thinking*
*teachers and schools*
*were there to benefit*
*children.*

*I felt bad*
*like*
*God will get me.*

*There was this*
*moment*
*of conflict*

*A good mother*
*Protects her children*
*from harm....*

*A good woman*
*does not challenge*
*Social structures....*

*Does she?*

**Art-Informed Representation**

Following the self-inquiry, I met with research participants to hear their stories. Here are excerpts from two of the women's stories, written as poetic narratives. The women describe self-identified moments of learning and significant change that resulted from their work as mothers.

*Rita's Story*

Rita is a 43-year-old immigrant woman who describes herself as Mulatto. She is the mother of seven children. After 25 years in an abusive marriage, her husband left and returned to Trinidad. It was at this point that Rita and two of her teenage sons experienced the painful realities of the Canadian legal system. In this excerpt from Rita's story, I centred her words in columns, to show the many ways in which she learned to centre herself as an individual and a woman, as a result of her experiences.

*Excerpt from: Courtroom Heartbreak*

*Now, isn't life funny?*
*My older boy got jailed*
*the first time*
*for something he didn't do.*

*The second time when he really was there,*
*he got off.*

*Now, my younger son got off*
*The first time, when he was there,*
*and the second time*
*when he knows nothing of what happened*
*they jailed him.*

*It's the justice system.*
*It's so messed up.*
*I'm wondering if it*
*needs a strict overhaul....*

*Well, the only part I wanted to do*
*something about*
*was that judge, judging me.*
*That really took me.*
*It was when he said:*

*"Oh, she's a single mother with*
*seven children.*
*That's the problem with these single moms.*
*They have to work and then*
*they can't look after their kids*
*And then their kids knock about...."*

*These men, judging women....*
*They don't know anything about*
*What it's like to be a single mom.*

*Well, it's made me realize,*
*the world is not*
*that man sitting there on his high throne,*
*like he's God.*
*It's hard to fight them, because*
*they get all the perks...*
*they know all the ropes,*
*and you're just at the bottom....*

*No, life is not very nice*
*and it's less nice for women,*
*'less nice still for single mothers;*
*'even less nice for vulnerable children,*
*and children of colour....*

*You're just at the bottom*
*of the heap!*

*If I met another woman*
*in a similar situation,*
*I would tell her everything!*
*I don't want to see this happen*
*to innocent people.*

*I'd say,*

*"Take notes.*
*Try to call for a mistrial!*
*Go for Freedom of Information:*
*try to get records of*
*what was said."*

*And I'd say,*
*"Fight for him,*
*fight tooth and nail.*

*Fight the system,*
*tooth and nail!*

*Do everything you can!*

*such a nice place, after all.*

*This is serious stuff.*
*And it just keeps niggling away*
*at the back of my mind...*

*Don't sit back and take it!*

*Because they'll walk*
*all over you!*

*Kate's Story*

Kate is a white, 40-year-old mother with two children. When Kate left her marriage (where she had been the primary caregiver) and came out as a lesbian four years ago, she had to redefine what motherwork meant for her. Again the right hand margins indicate Kate's struggle in pushing against the boundaries of societal expectations of her as a woman and a mother.

*Excerpt from: Reclaiming Motherwork*

*What I have discovered*
*in almost four years*
*of being a mother*
*who's not there,*

*is that mothering*
*in this culture*
*is all wrapped up with*
*being there...*

*with routine*
*and custodial*
*every day stuff.*

*I've had to redefine*
*what mothering is for me.*

*And to reclaim the fact that*
*I'm still an advisor,*
*a sort of guide person.*

*I am the person who cares,*
*who listens*
*who backs them up*
*and is willing to share,*
*...reminding them*
*where their boundaries are.*

*The can fall back on me*
*in their crises*
*and know that I'll give them heck*
*For doing wrong things....*

*But I'll be the first*
*to pat them on their backs*
*for doing well.*

*If other women*
*Were facing this struggle*
*I would say,*

*"Keep going.*
*Sort it out*
*moment by moment.*

*You can't decide the whole picture*
*at the outset.*

*But be true to yourself*
*and in the end*
*you will have the reassurance that*

*'This is really what I am,*
*this is who I am*
*And I feel it to the core.'"*

**To What End?**

This study contributes to the growing feminist discourse that seeks to make visible the still too invisible value of motherwork. In support of Hart's (1992, 1995) notion, research

findings indicate that the women who do this work, develop knowledge that is grounded first and foremost in life preserving, life affirming practice. Collectively the women identify the development and maintenance of the relationship with those being cared-for as key to their learning. Further, the women report that it is the life affirming work of caring for and advocating on behalf of children who face life's struggles, that motivates them to develop increased self trust (in the face of societal expectation of women's long suffering silence), to learn to take action, and to fight for justice.

In support of the views of Hart (1992) and Ruddick (1989), this research study presents a strong case that the learning and practice of motherwork at its best, is of great significance to the future of life itself, and that if this work, and the principles that arise out of it, were to be generalized to the greater society, this could contribute to the sustenance of the earth and all of life.

Further, in the current economic climate, where technology is replacing much of the "work" that was formerly done by "workers", and economists are predicting that the world of work, as we have known it, is rapidly disappearing (Aronowitz & Cutler, 1998), motherwork, the work of subsistence, care and nurture of life, is here to stay. In fact, due to the destruction that is being brought about by war and a profit driven economy, this work is becoming more crucial than ever. If we, as adult educators are to play a part in providing hope for the future, we will do well to ask ourselves, along with the women in this study, "to what end?" In other words, in what ways do the processes, products and learning we promote contribute to the promotion, affirmation and sustenance of life?

**Reciprocal Learning through Motherwork**

To conclude this paper, I share one last poem. I asked interview participants what they had learned from their children. This piece represents the collective responses of research participants, using a combination of reflective poetry and poetic narrative. The women's responses support the notions of Noddings (1984) and Ruddick (1989), who indicate that part of the reciprocity in the care giving relationship is manifest in the way that caregivers also receive care and learn from those cared-for.

*Children: Our Greatest Teachers*

*Collectively,*
*we watched*
*our children grow,*
*and through*
*Attentiveness and care,*
*we learned....*

*We learned to*
*Stop worrying.*
*To love living...*
*To be filled with*
*Optimism and hope....*

*We learned*
*We learned*
*a depth of loving*
*and emotion...*

*...of a love freely given,*
*unselfish,*
*without judgment,*
*filled with forgiving;*
*bearing no conditions.*

*And through our mothering,*
*we grew*
*in the knowledge*
*that instead of merely*

*To live and let live...*
*To let nature*
*Take its course,*
*having found that children*
*are not owned and*
*Cannot be controlled.*

*teaching our children,*
*as we had once imagined,*
*the children had become*

*our greatest teachers.*

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# Non-Governmental Organizations and Popular Education Programs: Can they Mobilize Culturally Appropriate Grassroots Organizations in Rural Bangladesh?

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**Abstract:** This paper will address the issues of popular education programs and the mobilization of grassroots organizations by NGOs from the context of culture and sustainable development in rural Bangladesh.

## Introduction

In developing countries, the terms 'partnership', 'people's participation' and 'popular education' have been widely used for the socio-economic and political development of disadvantaged people. In light of these key terms, development researchers, policy planners and program organizers often discuss poverty alleviation, people's empowerment, mobilization, people's organization, grassroots organization and people-centered development within the context of the international development agenda in developing countries. Over the years, Non-Governmental Organizations [NGOs] have gained popularity in these countries through the promotion of grassroots organizations and development.

In this paper, I will argue that the NGOs have ignored social, cultural and spiritual aspects of the rural people since they have been occupied with the massive expansion of programs for their own growth and development in the name of 'empowerment'. More importantly, the NGOs have been working to create dependency while building grassroots organizations in the villages with the assistance of Western donors. These grassroots organizations will not be sustained in the villages of Bangladesh if the external funding is not available. The critique of this paper is based on my own field research in the Southwestern part of Bangladesh from 1997-1999. I will begin with a brief review of literature on NGOs, popular education and grassroots development in developing countries. This will be followed by a description of NGOs, grassroots organizations and their expansion into the rural culture of Bangladesh. Finally, I will draw a conclusion from my discussion on these key points. Throughout this paper, I will use the terms 'grassroots organization' and 'people's organizations' interchangeably.

## Non-Governmental Organizations and Popular Education Programs

The empowerment concept of NGOs is mainly focused on consciousness raising, leadership training and the formation of grassroots organizations in villages through imparting popular education. Popular education is considered to be a process of collective learning where educators and educatees learn together through group action in order to make social change. In addition, popular education is politically radical and attempts to mobilize the disadvantaged groups for empowerment through grassroots organizations. It promotes a 'bottom up' approach instead of a 'trickle down' approach. "Popular education begins from people's physical, emotional and intellectual locations" (Clover et al.1998: 10). An important element of popular education programs is to liberate the villagers from colonial oppression and to assist them in valuing their own culture in order to strengthen their grassroots organizations through educational activities (Dawson, 1992).

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Grassroots Development**

The Non-Governmental Organizations [NGOs] are viewed as non-profit civil society organizations that are involved in grassroots promotion for the empowerment of the disadvantaged segments of the population (Clark, 1999). These NGOs have been engaged in empowering the rural disadvantaged people through the building of grassroots organizations in the villages. The NGOs have expanded their activities enormously over the last four decades in Asia, Africa and Latin America. There is a growing belief among the Western donors that participatory development can only be attained through the active involvement of NGOs in development. Despite these factors, international organizations, including the World Bank, tend to involve NGOs in development activities in order to put political pressure on governments in the developing countries. Although NGOs in recent times have been considered as efficient agencies by the international development agencies, there are strong critiques of their roles, policies and operations in grassroots development. In the view of Fowler (1988); "NGOs have their own goals and vested interests which may not concur with those of their intended beneficiaries. NGOs' organization structures just seem to have emerged from their [funding] history rather than being appropriately designed for the purpose of micro-development" (p.13). In recent times, NGOs have become more project oriented than people oriented because of foreign funding. In most cases, they are occupied in the massive expansion of programs in the rural areas, regardless of any participation from the rural people. "NGOs have suffered from a limited vision of their roles" (Korten, 1990:91). Although they have been successful as advocates of people's participation and empowerment, their conceptual clarity with regard to participation in the process of grassroots development remains vague (Galjart, 1995). Their work is mostly limited to welfare activities in order to relieve the immediate suffering of the people. Much of their programs have been confined to the basic needs approach rather than political empowerment for social change. In most cases, the role of the NGOs in the rural societies tends to maintain a patron-client relationship in the name of empowerment (Barua, 1999).

**Context of NGOs and Grassroots Development in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh has a total of 56,977 sq. miles or 147570 sq. km. with a population of 111.4 million as of March 11, 1992. Ninety percent of the people live in rural areas and over sixty percent live by agriculture alone (BBS, 1996). Although Bangladesh was rich economically during the pre-colonial period, at the present time seventy percent of the rural population is landless [owning less than 0.5 of an acre each]. Over 50 million people are living in absolute poverty and of these, more than 25 million are living in extremely harsh circumstances. Rural people are more than twice as likely to be poor compared to those living in the cities (Saddi, 1998). The people of Bangladesh have experienced colonial oppression for more than two hundred years. More significantly, they have faced military rule for nearly 30 years from 1947 to 1992. The participation of people in the political process was not a regular event (Barua, 1999). Over the years, the people of Bangladesh have struggled for their liberation based on their language and cultural identities (Jahan, 1996). In spite of their long struggle, Bangladesh only emerged as an independent nation state through a war of liberation in 1971. The liberation struggle sensitized the young freedom fighters to work for the empowerment of the rural people. Eventually, these freedom fighters came forward with a commitment to establish Non-Governmental Organizations [NGOs] in the post-liberation era in order to help these rural people. The NGOs have now extended their programs to 24 million rural people in 78% of the villages in the 490 thanas [sub-districts] with the financial support of international NGOs and bilateral and multilateral donors (Karim, M., 1993).

NGOs have implemented a variety of activities in the villages of Bangladesh without consistent effort. "It is obvious that they have not gone through an evaluation of their own development process" (ADAB/PRIP/IDR[1], 1992:2). In fact, the monetary and materialistic environment within the development organizations has largely demobilized the creativity of the rural people in Bangladesh. Although, NGOs adopted the Frerian concept of 'conscientization' in the late 1970s to enhance the awareness of the rural people in Bangladesh, they have now mainly engaged in the promotion of development through capital building and monetary transactions in order to attract these people. NGOs have been primarily confined to building their own power base and authority rather than to collective education in the villages.

**Grassroots Organizations and the Rural Culture**

The popular education programs of NGOs emphasized the building of grassroots organizations through the target group approach. This approach organizes the disadvantaged men and women based on economic homogeneity in order to change their economic and political status in the society. Popular education programs of NGOs tend to replace the existing indigenous social organizations. They usually present the view that the existing indigenous social organizations are 'oppressive' and do not allow any social and physical mobility within the society. This notion has eventually allowed NGOs to mobilize *samities* [grassroots organizations] in the villages with the intention of creating an exploitation free society through social movement. In fact, the formation of grassroots organizations was adopted by the NGOs in the 1970s. Since the rural people participate in the samity, they are able to receive monetary benefit from the NGOs. This new form of organization maintains bureaucratic social norms, regulations, administrative responsibilities and record keeping which are new to the samity members. In most cases, these are practiced by the Extension Workers in order to maintain reporting procedures since the members of the samity are unable to do this (Barua, 1999). Generally, the village people tend to maintain their social responsibilities through an oral record keeping procedure. "Writing does not bear any meaning here" (Freire, 1985:13). Since the formation of samities takes place within the organizational framework of NGOs, the members of the samities are not able to liberate their thoughts through critical consciousness. Rather, the relationship between the NGOs and the villagers is often developed toward a didactic rather than the participative.

Interestingly, I observed that the cohesiveness and solidarity of members in the samity is mainly based on their *gosthi* [lineage/clan], *sanskrity* [cultural/religious identity], and *para* [neighborhood] identities within the rural society of Bangladesh. These three key elements have also been essential in mobilizing samities in the villages, whatever the form of educational activity. Generally, most of the members of a particular samity are closely connected through a network of para where they live and interact continuously with each other everyday. Since the gosthi and sanskrity networks are deeply rooted within the socio-cultural environment of the Bangladeshi village, it is probably impossible to ignore these social networks within the para of the villages. In addition, one cannot deny the role of the existing gosthi and sanskrity networks in mobilizing the disadvantaged groups of people and making grassroots organizations. Such gosthi, sanskrity and para networks act virtually as an informal educational forum in sharing the information and messages within the villages. This type of educative sharing takes place spontaneously in the villages through everyday social and emotional relationships and interactions rather than through institutionalized and bureaucratic structures (Barua, 1999). Despite this,

[1] ADAB: Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh. PRIP: Private Rural Initiatives Program. IDR: Institute of Development Research.

NGOs ignore the cultural identity of people while mobilizing peoples' organizations. It may also be of some benefit to refer to an example from the Latin American context. In Peruvian society traditional community organizational structures were considered to be effective instruments/tools for social transformation and group solidarity without the external imposition of new ones. Rural peasant communities were mobilized into grassroots organizations through popular education (Gianotten and Wit, 1990).

In Bangladesh, there are 200,000 *masjids* [mosques], 100,000 *mukhtabs* [Islamic schools] (Shahidullah, 1997) and 5,766 *madrashas* [Islamic schools] (Rashiduzzaman, 1994) deeply rooted in the villages which are involved in the mobilization of the people through their educational programs. The religious institutions and the indigenous organizations (kinship ties/networks) have a strong say in determining socio-political behavior in the rural socio-cultural life. The social and political bonds among the rural people, whether poor or rich, are based on their kinship ties and religious affinities. During my involvement in the field, the members of the various' samities expressed their deep respect for their religion, social and cultural identities and said that they would want to maintain these identities. The extension workers of NGOs also confirmed that they are more accepted in the villages if they go to the mosques and temples. Despite this fact, the NGOs repeatedly expressed the view that they would like to ensure the economic growth and democratic rights of disadvantaged groups through the mobilization of grassroots organizations. However, I believe the NGOs can only promote such efforts with the assistance of their Western donors who tend to impose conditions and terms on the basis of their own ideology.

NGOs are critical of social and religious institutions within the villages and they often label these groups as being 'hegemonic groups'. Consequently, thousands of NGOs education centers were vandalized by religious groups in 1990 and 1991 as part of a cultural challenge in Bangladesh. Because of this, even liberal and socio-political parties could not avoid the appeal of using socio-religious and cultural identities in order to win the national election of 1996. The introduction of the democratic process has virtually allowed every group to bargain for their social, cultural and political identities. If NGOs become involved in the *religious right versus liberal* conflict, they will lose their power base due to the strong hold of religious institutions and indigenous organizations in the program villages (Rashiduzzaman, 1994). Incidentally, while implementing education for disadvantaged groups in Latin American society, Paulo Freire also could not ignore religious institutions. Rather, he was involved in these institutions in order to promote education for the benefit of disadvantaged groups. Freire emphasized that; "My 'meetings' with Marx never suggested to me to stop 'meeting' Christ" (Quoted in Lange, 1998). Considering this, NGOs, Islamic schools, trusts and social service groups would arguably be more productive if they could work together collectively rather than with hostility in promoting popular education for the villagers in Bangladesh.

The formation of grassroots organizations within the target group [based on economic criteria] has easily helped the people become alienated from their community or encouraged them to depend on the implementing agencies. Furthermore, given the rural disadvantaged group's continued dependence on these catalytic forces, it is very difficult for them to develop their own grassroots organizations as well as the independent leadership skills necessary to develop democratic rights in the rural society. Such grassroots organizations are usually maintained only as long as NGOs remain in the villages. In other words, the members of the grassroots organization would only assemble in the weekly meetings in order to receive their monetary benefits from the NGOs through a micro-credit scheme. As a result, the NGOs are able to channel credit to the rural people with an interest rate of 15%-22% (Economist, 1998) in the name of

empowerment and development. Attention has been focused on money and material items rather than the social, cultural and spiritual aspects of the rural people.

**Conclusion**

After considerable examination of the formation of grassroots organizations in Bangladesh, I have found that the indigenous social organizations, socio-cultural and religious networks play a significant role in mobilizing the rural people despite NGOs insistence on people's organization based on economic homogeneity. In other words, the cohesiveness and solidarity of members is mainly dependent upon their gosthi, sanskrity, and para identities. Considering this, I believe that self-sustained grassroots organizations can only be mobilized on the basis of a thorough understanding of the local culture. The imposition of new forms of grassroots organizations has created dependency in the name of development. The formation of grassroots organizations based on a Western urban notion of development may not create any base or space for rural people to develop their own organizations in Bangladesh. The rural people of Bangladesh maintain their own social, cultural, spiritual and psychological values in order to live in harmony with nature and their society. If the NGOs truly intend to empower the rural people, they will need to conceptualize the issue of building grassroots organizations based on the reality experienced by the villagers within their unique social environment.

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# The Learning Organization: A Diverse Community of Knowledge Workers

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**Abstract:** The Learning Organization and Organizational Learning have emerged as metaphors and models for successful and competitive organizations. Because the new economy is driven by knowledge, intellectual capital figures prominently in a firm's value. Knowledge workers learn from and contribute to the intellectual capital of Learning Organizations.

In the global economy of the millennium, mental adaptability, flexibility, and dexterity are the stock in trade of the life-long learner. Decades ago, Malcolm Knowles (1973) identified the adult learner, the self-motivated life-long learner. More recently, however, Business Management and Human Resource Development (HRD) have drawn on concepts in adult learning to posit the Learning Organization and Organizational Learning as metaphors for the adaptation and growth required by corporations if they are to compete in the global market (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Senge, 1990). Models of human learning have been drawn on to develop a model of organizational learning (Postman, 1976; Kolb, 1984; Bandura, 1986; Schein, 1993). Like the adult learner, the organization draws on experience, transforms information into knowledge, and puts knowledge to constructive use.

The information age of the 1990s has evolved into the knowledge age of the millennium. Knowledge has displaced traditional assets of land, labour, and capital as the principal source of industrial value (Havens & Knapp, 1999). Especially in high-tech industries, knowledge supercedes tangible assets as a necessity for a corporation to sustain a competitive advantage. Intellectual Capital, "the sum of everything everybody in a company knows that gives it a competitive edge" (Stewart, 1999, p. xix), is an elusive, intangible, but critical asset.

## Knowledge and Learning

Learning is an innately human activity. Growth in knowledge, one result of learning, is a function of maturing and developing. For adults, experience plays a significant role in knowledge acquisition: Kolb asserts, "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created by the transformation of experience" (1984, p. 38). Kolb's theory of experiential learning informs much of the literature on staff development and training. Humans bring to an organization their prior education, experience, knowledge, and skills, and as they interact within the organization, they draw on new experience to further develop their skills and knowledge, thus adding to their human capital to the value of the organization. In order to learn, they require neither organizational assets nor organizational capital, yet they can, and do, learn from their experiences in the organization. Conversely, the organization depends on individuals to draw on experience and continuously grow and learn.

*Organizational Learning*

Nevis *et. al.* (1995) differentiate between personal knowledge, possessed by an individual by virtue of education or experience, and collective knowledge, identified as organizational memory or a publicly documented body of knowledge. Much like an adult learner, a Learning Organization is said to accumulate experiences, drawing on feedback about past decisions to incrementally adjust its reactions to similar problems (Pennings *et. al*, 1994). Further, organizational learning is defined as "an organization's capacity to take effective action" (Kim, 1993). However, an organization cannot develop, learn, grow, or take action independently of its human capital. If the organization is to add to its intellectual capital, it must capture tacit knowledge of the individual and make it explicit in the organizational structure (Lynn, 2000). In this way, it manages knowledge; however, in order to learn, it must apply knowledge. Organizational learning links cognition and action (Crossen, Lane & White, 1999).

Until a human puts knowledge to use, it is an unvalued asset. Until a human shares knowledge within the firm, it is the individual's human capital, not the organization's. The knowledge possessed by employees represents a key source of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations (Elsdon & Iyer, 1999). Knowledge is an asset, but it is a slippery asset to value, manage, and measure. Lew Platt, former CEO of Hewlett Packard has acknowledged the dilemma: "If HP knew what HP knows, we would be three times as profitable" (Fryer, 1999). Intellectual capital is collective knowledge. Who collects it and who disseminates it? Successful and competitive organizations are rich in knowledge, but whose knowledge is it and who is responsible for managing it?

Organizational knowledge has been codified, stored, and managed – it is explicit, systematic, and easily communicated in the form of hard data and codified procedures (Inkpen, 1996). This contrasts with personal, internalized, tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1967). Tacit knowledge involves intangible factors imbedded in personal beliefs, experiences, and values. Internalized, tacit knowledge is not easily communicated or even readily acknowledged by those who possess it. Organizations draw on individuals' tacit knowledge when they develop and implement explicit knowledge. Nonaka (1994) writes of the spiral of knowledge creation, whereby individuals, then groups, then organizations as a whole, convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge.

*Attitudes toward knowledge and learning*

The new millennium highlights a new reality: the knowledge worker is the critical contributor to organizational success. Individuals bring knowledge with them to the workplace, knowledge they have acquired through education, training, and experience, and, if they leave the workplace, they take with them additional knowledge acquired there. Their leaving behind any personal knowledge depends on whether or not the organization has transformed it into organizational knowledge, whether or not the organization has learned.

A recent Canadian study notes a link between human capital and value creation in North American firms. In particular, a collegial, flexible workplace is identified as a major factor in recruiting, nurturing, and retaining valuable human capital (Watson Wyatt Worldwide, 2000). Successful learning organizations are those which minimize "barriers of distance and the product silos that usually exist in larger companies" (Hickins, 1999). Ideally, learning organizations are communities of learners, all working toward common goals. The community includes a wide range of stakeholders: owners (or stockholders), partners, vendors, and clients as well as the

readily identified staff. Stewart (1998) notes that The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce has been a leader in acknowledging clients and customers as critical components of a learning organization's intellectual capital, thus extending the community of the Learning Organization.

Knowledge, human capital, and intellectual capital are valuable only when they are put into action. Learning and knowledge are reflected in performance. Industries identify best practices, and these are public knowledge, while firm-specific practices are valuable private intellectual capital (Matusik & Hill, 1998). Indeed, the concept of "performance gaps" has replaced "knowledge gaps" in the Learning Organization (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). There are fewer "right answers" in the global cyber-economy. Because knowledge often becomes obsolete, learning must be continuous. The old image of the learning curve no longer suffices: a curve up which learners struggle until they get over the hump and thenceforth "know" their jobs. Just as there is no "right answer" anymore, so too there is no "right way" of doing things. The new economy has moved from a "teaching by telling" to a "learning by doing" mindset (Schank, 1997).

The Learning Organization depends on life-long learners to contribute to the firm's intellectual capital and build and retain a sustainable competitive advantage. Especially in the industrialized world, growth in human capital per worker has grown in two areas: capital deepening -- individual workers have improved their performance of particular skills; and capital widening -- individual workers have increased their ability to acquire a variety of skills (Lindbeck & Snower, 2000). Again, knowledge is reflected in performance. Performance on the job is reflected in continuous learning. Generation X's attitude toward training and supervision highlights an emphasis on performance: "Tell me what to do, give me the information, and then let me create" (Tulgan, 1996). Performance support (How can I help you perform?) is preferred to training (What can I teach you?). If new practices are created and shared, then individual human capital becomes part of the intellectual capital of the learning organization.

Indeed, the learning organization must be communal. However, harsh realities of the new economy have resulted in employment practices which discourage individuals' contributing their personal human capital to the organizational knowledge pool. For many, knowledge may represent a personal, not corporate competitive advantage, a personal, not corporate, edge. How can learning organizations prosper if individuals value knowledge, but generally for personal, not corporate reasons? Corporate acquisitions, mergers, reorganizations, downsizing, rightsizing, and restructuring have affected attitudes of staff. In the new economy, employment has become intermittent and contingent; a permanent employee is an oxymoron (Greco, 1998). Consequently, individuals may view knowledge as a source of power, as leverage, or as a guarantee of continued employment. In these respects, knowledge has value for them.

**The GenX Worker**

Generation X has joined the workforce of the new economy. Unlike the Baby Boomers who preceded them, Generation Xers cannot and do not seek life-long employment, but they do crave life-long learning. They seek employability over employment: they value career self-reliance (Elsdon & Iyer, 1999). Over the last decade and into the millennium, attitudes toward employment and employability have altered.

The new reality is one of intermittency. This intermittency separates high- and low-demand staff, especially those newly entering or those with short tenure in the workplace. Some workers are itinerant by choice: they are in demand because their human capital is valued and valuable to employers, and they choose to change employers frequently. Others are short-term.

temporary, or part-time by circumstance. They are looked upon as expenses, not as investments because their human capital is not valued by employers, and employers do not retain them in times of low growth or negative growth. A recent study (Simpson, 2000) makes econometric estimates of the long-term effects of intermittent work activity on lifetime earnings. Young workers and women are the most affected by the "great slump" of the 1990s with its declining employment rate and continuing unemployment. However, not all young workers are affected negatively by changes to the economy.

Generation Xers with high human capital, technical skills, education, learning, and experience are valuable to organizations, and they are in demand: "Never have so few been wanted by so many" (Zemke *et.al.*, 2000). Those most in demand, the new "gold-collar workers" are educated, smart, creative, computer literate, and equipped with portable skills (Munk, 1998). Indeed, they are free agents, and thus are perceived by life-long employees of an earlier generation as being disloyal, arrogant, unfocused, unwilling to pay dues, and not amenable to deferred gratification (Tulgan, 1996). In fact, Generation Xers are preparing for careers, not for tenure in a specific organization, and, since they cannot hope for career-long support from the organization, they are increasingly career-self-reliant. The "technologically savvy, fickle, ultramobile Generation X workforce" (Harari, 1998) value self-advancement over corporate advancement. They view their human capital as personal, not corporate, assets.

Since, on average, Generation Xers change jobs frequently, on average every 18 months (Kronenberg, 1997), a new reality has emerged with regard to firm- and industry-specific and knowledge. While long-term Baby Boomer employees may be proficient in firm-specific private knowledge, the mobile Generation Xers bring with them knowledge from a number of firms and both wide and deep human capital, but they are likely to take information from the organization with them when they leave. In fact, the challenge to knowledge management is to increase the company's intellectual capital despite the "industry-jumping, extremely mobile employee" (Vollmer & Phillips, 2000).

The Learning Organization suggests a "Come, learn with us, and stay" culture, which in reality is often a "Come, learn, and go" or even a "Come, share what you know, and we'll let you go" situation. The community of the learning organization is not stable. As the community changes, the organization must learn and grow and adapt. For individuals, the new economy implies intermittency of work: free agency for those in demand, and involuntary unemployment or under-employment for others. The Learning Organization of the millennium cannot be merely a site of contingent or intermittent employment for adult learners who place a personal, not a corporate, value on their individual human capital; it must be a diverse community of knowledge workers.

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# Learning in Later Life: Researchers' Initial Impressions

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**Abstract:** In this paper the researchers report initial impressions of a study in progress. Over 50 seniors have been interviewed about their informal learning to shed light on "third age" learning.

## Background and Purpose

The new Approaches to Lifelong Learning survey (1998) of informal learning in Canada confirmed what adult educators have long know intuitively: that "virtually all Canadian adults are active learners" (Livingstone, 1999, p.68). While many studies focus on workplace learning, fewer explore the learning which people undertake after retirement. Lamdin and Fugate (1997) found that while older adults spend considerable time learning, surprisingly few are studying formally in universities and colleges; their learning experiences are more frequently informal, pursued in non-academic environments.

We are engaged in a study investigating informal learning experiences – the contexts, kinds, processes, benefits, barriers – among older Canadian adults. The stories of older adults' learning affirm, encourage, and support their learning endeavours and provide important information for those engaged in program planning for this expanding portion of the population. We hope to help diminish stereotypes about learning among older adults in our society.

We have completed a pilot study and over 50 interviews for the main study and are currently involved in data analysis. From the pilot and our initial analysis, certain themes about elderlearners already stand out. In this paper we explain our methodology and share general impressions we have about learning in the "third age" of life. More detailed findings will be reported when the analysis has been completed.

## Research Design

A pilot study was conducted of thirteen retired women and men ranging from 56 to 86 who were interviewed about their informal and formal learning endeavours over the past year. These interviews supported our belief that many older adults are indeed engaged in considerable learning about diverse topics. This finding was consistent across a variety of ethnocultural, educational, and work backgrounds. Furthermore this initial investigation raised questions as to the validity of viewing learning only as a discrete activity apart from daily living relationships. This was a point of inquiry which we listened for more carefully in the main study. The pilot helped refine the questions we needed to explore in greater depth in the main study.

Our initial attempts to involve seniors' organizations in doing the research with us proved futile. Seniors' organizations tend to be fluid in membership and leadership. As a result the interviews were conducted and analyzed by us, the research co-ordinator and graduate student research assistant. Potential interviewees were identified through seniors' organizations, people who work with seniors, and personal contacts. Attempts were made to include people from a range of ethnocultural, educational, and class backgrounds with a

balance of women and men. Because of the wide range of age and health status within the third age, attention was also given to including people in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s.

Fifty-one people (28 women and 23 men) ranging from early 60s to mid 90s were interviewed. Participants came from varying ethnic background including English, Irish, Scottish, French, Jewish, German, Dutch, Italian, Philippino, Indian, Korean, and Japanese. Some had emigrated to Canada, others' families had been in Canada for several generations. Thirty-eight lived in their own homes and apartments, 13 lived in retirement or nursing homes. Their formal educational background encompassed grade school, high school, university, and graduate school. A large majority rated their health as average or better.

The women's careers had included fulltime and parttime homemaking, office work, teaching, sales, consulting, law, music, art, computer programming, educational research, physiotherapy, nursing, and social work. The men's careers had included toolmaking, field engineering, teaching, advertising, civil service, business, university directorship, cooking, research, nutrition, music, social work, drafting, farming, construction, armed forces, clerical, medicine, and management.

We are now moving into the stage of careful investigation of the data collected. While formal analysis will provide more detailed information, being immersed in the interviewing process has already provided us with initial general impressions. In this paper we share some of these preliminary reflections.

## Impressions

### *Excitement about their Learning*

Overall we have been surprised by the strong emotional responses as these older people shared stories of their learning episodes. When asked what would make her learning easier, a 73-year-old woman quipped, "If I didn't have to sleep!" One man declared himself to be "addicted to learning." While we do not suggest that learning later in life is homogeneous or that everyone interviewed had such a high level of energy for it, there was without doubt generally great enthusiasm for learning. People were generally excited about their investigations and eager to tell stories of what they were exploring. A woman in her 90s, determined to share he life in the residence for a few hours, invited the interviewer to "learn by observation" by joining her as she delivered a birthday card to another resident turning 102. A number of people talked about the popularity of courses and lecture series for seniors to the point of having to get to the registration line early in order to be sure to get a place. Many exuded enthusiasm as they recounted adventures of the mind. The energy generated over conversations about learning was contagious; as we listened, we felt stimulated by their clear thinking and visible excitement.

### *After Retirement Learning Changes*

An inner motivation to follow their own interests replaced the external pressures of learning in order to survive in the workplace. While some had prepared for retirement with care and were doing what they had planned, others were surprised with their new life. "Never in my wildest imagination did I think I would take a history course; I never liked history!" said a woman in her early 70s. In the middle of her second semester of French history at interview time, she was obviously enjoying it. An engineer who in the past had

had to learn under pressure in order to keep up with his job described his present learning as joy. These seniors appreciated the freedom of retirement as they sought their own areas of learning rather than feeling pressured to learn for work requirements. No doubt being in charge and following their own interests rather than having the focus dictated by demands of a job contributed greatly to the sense of excitement mentioned earlier.

*Intentionally Planned Learning Goals and Incidental Learning*

These elderlearners indicated an openness to two different processes of learning. Sometimes people thought about what they wanted to learn and deliberately set out to find appropriate resources such as workshops, courses, books, websites, and experts. At other times people talked about the "perchance" learning which occurs in conversations and everyday happenings when one keeps open to possibilities for new insights. Most identified both kinds of learning journeys although certain individuals seemed more likely to pursue a goal-focused approach while other individuals were more intrigued with the surprises of learning from what Bateson (1994) calls "peripheral vision". This approach was eloquently expressed by a man who answered a question about whether he had any plans for learning anything new in the near future. He immediately replied, "Yes, but I don't know what they are. They'll discover me!" This attitude of openness to discovery from the daily relationships and activities of their lives was common among many participants.

*Learning Even from Negative Experiences*

Some, working to make sense of painful traumatic experiences in their lives, identified insights and learnings which helped them reconciled their losses. A Jewish woman feeling the trauma of the holocaust always close linked that painful memory with her drive to learn. Another Jewish woman in her 80s who had escaped Nazi Germany remarked that she did not want to accept or forget; she was "still learning about the insanity of a nation." She continued: "Hitler was a most profound teacher for me; I have learned about the evil of intolerance and I understand that evil is not accepting human beings." Another woman who lived in England during WW2 stated that the war still provided learning as she continued to reflect on it; the experience has made her compassionate toward refugees from war-torn countries today. A number of people talked about learning from illness which befell them as they came to terms with accepting their decreased mobility and moved toward greater peace of mind in spite of failing health. Another painful source of learning for some was through their experience of death of a spouse or other loved one.

*Self-discovery and Self-acceptance*

Learning contributed to a changing sense of themselves for several people. One woman described it as "image building" and was delighted with this unexpected new self she was discovering. For some, learning led to increased confidence as they discovered unknown skills and competencies. Repeatedly people spoke of feeling better about themselves and becoming more interesting individuals as a result of keeping their minds active. Many also reported their children and grandchildren's sense of pride as they engaged in intelligent conversations. They were concerned about keeping up with a rapidly changing world and did not want to be left behind. One man in his mid 80s was very clear

that a strong motivator for his learning was the desire to have intelligent conversations with his grandchildren. Stretching their own minds through various learning activities was viewed as a critical way of maintaining meaningful connections with younger generations.

*Learning Enriches Life*

This theme recurred throughout the interviews. A man stated, "It energizes me to think of all the fascinating things out there I'd love to know about. It provides a focus for my day; it structures my time." In feeling more alive and having a reason to get up in the morning, people expressed that learning was integral to their quality of life. Several talked as though learning was like breathing; once we stop we are dead. They could not imagine not learning. "Learning," said one, "is a large part of having a life." A recently retired man compared not learning with being a prisoner or hostage, a dreadful situation for him. The high level of intentionality in seeking books, courses (mainly non-credit), websites, documentaries, journals, and knowledgeable people to converse with indicated the strong hunger for knowledge and the joy they have when engaged in intellectual pursuits. These individuals were not coasting through the third age of life.

*Sense of Immediacy*

On several occasions the point was made that they were seeking education, not entertainment, when they watched TV or attended concerts and plays. They prized lectures given before a concert or read about a play before going to the theatre. They selected television programs such as documentaries, newscasts, biographies and the history channel because they were thirsty to learn; few watched TV just for entertainment. Many seemed aware of their shortening lifespan and were graciously learning to accept the limitations of failing eyesight and health which were constraining their efforts. They lived more in the present without making long-range plans for the future, accepting the realities of the end stage of life.

*Learning Woven into Daily Life and Relationships*

Few viewed it as a discrete activity outside their regular schedule. For most, learning is a thread woven throughout their daily activities and conversations, a natural part of ongoing affairs more than a separate activity which is done in a time and place set apart. Their natural curiosity discovered opportunities for learning in whatever they were experiencing at a given moment. This integration caused almost all the interviewees considerable difficulty in trying to quantify their learning. They were reluctant to state how many hours they spent on learning in an average week. At times they even had difficulty identifying learning since daily tasks and activities had elements of learning for them. One summed up the thought: "All our lives we are learning and then we still have to learn how to die."

**Summary**

These preliminary general impressions from seniors' learning experiences are intriguing. As we complete the final stages of the study, we anticipate discovering many more elements about learning in the third age which will affirm the stories of the many curious elderlearners in Canadian society and point directions for program planners offering resources to aging adults eager to continue learning.

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# Postcards from the Edge:
# Towards a Tribal, Postcolonial View of Adult Education

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to identify how Indigenous worldviews can contribute to several emergent and longstanding areas of interest within adult education. We argue that Indigenous worldviews can create space for deeper understanding of the limitations of Western Eurocentric rationalist views of learning, culture, liberation and progress.

## Introduction

In this paper we offer up the beginnings of a tapestry woven from threads of a conversation which we have been engaged in for the past three years, although it has been disrupted and fragmented by the challenges of work, family and community. We are an Indigenous practitioner-scholar and a feminist adult education practitioner-scholar who have, through our conversations, discovered several nodes of mutual interest. Many of these concerns, which we outline below, are also common foci of attention in the study of adult education.

For example, there has existed longstanding concern within adult education with how learning is central to movements for social justice. We argue that much can be learned from the activities taking place within First Nations communities around the globe as they fight for self determination and for the conditions required for their survival. Lifelong learning has been another key notion for the field of adult education. Many critical adult educators have lamented the way neo-liberal policy and discourse has appropriated this concept and created a sense that lifelong learning now means individuals are 'sentenced' to lifelong schooling. Perhaps part of our efforts to re-imagine the power of lifelong learning can be enlivened by exploring the meaning of lifelong learning within Indigenous cultures where learning is not separated from community and family life, where the past and the future are living in the present. The centrality of story telling within Indigenous cultures and communities and the interest in story telling and narrative within adult education presents another opportunity to learn. In recent years we have also begun to discuss and understand better the role of spirituality and learning. This is another topic where dialogue between non-native and native adult educators should take place. There is much we can learn from understanding the holistic, experiential and place-based approach to adult education from Indigenous ways of knowing that value multiple aspects of human engagement and relational orientation.

In the remainder of this paper, we present each of our voices reflecting our different points of entry into this consideration of a tribal, postcolonial view of adult education. We have been engaged in a dialogic inquiry where we each occupy positions of learner and educator, sometimes simultaneously. Our dialogue has included others as well. Burbules (1993) emphasizes the relational quality of the interaction where there are aspects of dialogue "... that are beyond us, that we discover, that we are changed by" (p. xii). We suggest that dialogue be understood and practiced as the way for non-Indigenous and

Indigenous adult educators to learn together. Our conversations have required that we be patient, that we listen, and that we tolerate disagreement.

**Michael: The Sacred and the Profane**

In the last decade, a number of scholars, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have illuminated the colliding nature of Western academic knowledge and traditional, Indigenous ways of knowing. These tensions reverberate not just around themes of orality vs text, colonial hegemony, or linguistic structures, but are embedded in counterpoised epistemic assumptions between the two worlds of Native and non-Native. Paulo Freire's notion of cultural power has been applied as a way of framing a theory of Indigenous education that contains emancipatory possibilities, but Freire's model has problems when applied to tribal approaches to culture and community. Freire's dialectical and materialist assertions about individuals transforming culture through praxis is contrary to many Indigenous perspectives affirming the culture's sacred power to transform individuals and create collective harmony and revelatory moments. For First Nations, the culture, when clarified apart from colonial hegemony, affirms sacred, traditional relationships between humans, animals, and plants. This mythic understanding of responsibility is in contradistinction to Freirean objectivity predicated on rights and freedoms that would remove individuals from the context of the sacredness of culture. I suggest that an exploration of the Indigenous resonances and conflicts with Freire's concepts of culture, power, and liberation will be fruitful for both Indigenous studies as well as the field of adult education. I would like to draw attention to how oral tradition has acted as a uniquely Native form of critical pedagogy and how First Nations community sensibilities are linked to relationships with the landscape and the local sense of place. Knowledge and power are, from the Native perspective, not transportable from the sacred, and local, sense of place.

Sandy Grande (2000), in a Harvard Educational Review article, explores both the tensions and resonances with critical theorists. She point out that, "the particular history of imperialism enacted upon Indigenous peoples requires a reevaluation of dominant view of democracy and social justice, and of the universal validity of such emancipatory projects" (p. 468). One of the central problems of incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into a more generalizable discourse on social justice is that, too often, a liberal normalizing narrative on democratic individualism is asserted. The fundamental assumption of this narrative is that cultural forms are constructed by individuals within intersecting and colliding matrices of power relationships. For indigenous peoples, this is a problematic stance since it assumes that once culture can be modified sufficiently, both distributive and representative justice can be enacted. It is a modernist teleology that asserts progress as a meta-narrative.

For Indigenous people, the concept of progress is suspect, at best; at worst, progress is a tandem to "democracy" which implies acquiescence and assimilation into the cognitive and economic imperialism of atomized individuals competing for rights and privileges. Feminism, including Maxist, Liberal, and Eco-Feminism has been viewed as disruptive to tribal values that assert sacred categories of gender relationships and oral traditions that affirm intricate patterns of responsibilities and identities. Human rights and social justice groups, along with some environmental groups, have been unwilling to respect First Nations' claims to a sovereign collectivist sensibility that affirms the mythic sense of both identity and relationality embedded in oral tradition. In the Indigenous sense, this oral tradition is circumscribed by a sense of place. That is, the land itself contains stories and knowledge about proper human conduct, relationships between men and women, and the

structuring of society contiguous with the natural forces and laws of a bioregion. For tribal people, a critical theory that is abstracted from the concrete and mythopoetic sensibilities of the land, is a potentially dangerous reification.

I urge others to examine what is meant when the terms ideology and culture enter into our academic conversations. I have been thinking that culture is the agreement about what the debates are, and ideology is the debate. I would like to go back to my point about Freire's problematic position regarding culture. It is not possible to consciously change culture in the sense that we can predict the effects of our choices and decisions. One of the questions I put to the teacher education students in my classes is "do cultures have the right to defend themselves or only individuals". I also want them to think about what social justice means when you consider culture, because all cultures have healthy and pathological aspects. For Indigenous peoples, we have creation stories where the culture produces the people. A key to creating dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is to tell each other stories. I think we need more stories from non-Indigenous authors who speak about the experience of their research and how it has disrupted their worldview.

**Shauna: Being Apart and Coming Together**

I will take up Michael's invitation for non-Indigenous authors to speak about their experiences of disruption and enter into this conversation both eager and hesitant. The more I learn about Indigenous worldviews, the more I realize how much I do not know. I am struck with the deep and fundamental ontological and epistemological differences between Indigenous worldviews and the one I was born into, the one that I see, hear, think, and feel with. The simultaneity of knowing/not knowing is both exciting and troubling. The ground has shifted. Not knowing and knowing that I do not know at times creates space for learning, and at other times, the air is sucked out of the room.

I have argued with Michael about his perspective on Freire's approach to culture and some feminist critiques of the gendered division of labour within Indigenous society. But his critiques have also drawn my attention to the profound differences in our worldviews and our own meaning making in relation to understanding culture and gender. One of the key outcomes for me in my conversations with Michael, has been a different understanding of culture. From the perspective of critical pedagogy, and key to many different feminisms, is a sense that culture is a 'problem'. Culture (read patriarchal, capitalist) is implicated in the maintenance of oppression, particularly women's oppression. A paradox has become clear. Many feminist strategies for change are based on the view that what needs to change and be transformed is culture because it reinforces certain kinds of oppressions. For Indigenous tribes, culture is what colonial and imperial forces have attempted, sometimes with success, to destroy. Culture in these struggles is what must be sustained; it is at the heart of resistance and survival.

I offer to this conversation some ideas that I have learned from other teachers and experiences. Engaging in dialogue with Indigenous peoples has only happened in my adult life. A turning point in my own education about Canada's colonial legacy, particularly residential schools, came when, during my doctoral studies, I attended a summer institute on gender and development in Halifax. There I met women from around the world and several other Canadian students, and two First Nations women. Nora was an Ojibway woman who worked in literacy and was well known for her efforts to maintain and teach Indigenous languages. Dilah was a medicine woman, was active in band politics and was from the Pegan reserve next to where I was born. It was an intense month-long residential

learning experience where these women, with care and respect, confronted and challenged me. One particular conversation has remained in my memory. Nora was expressing frustration about how white women, although the minority in the program, were dominating the conversations in class. I agreed, reflecting that I needed to talk less myself. She reiterated her concern about domination, describing the problem of 'talking heads'; I repeated my resolution to talk less. She turned to me and said "Shauna, it isn't simply a matter of you not talking. I want you to listen, really listen. Do not equate an absence of talk with an ability to listen". Then she took my hands and put them firmly over my ears pressing and massaging until my ears were almost burning. She then took my hands and placed them over my heart and with tears of frustration said, "... use you ears and your heart, they will teach you far more than you can imagine".

Students in the classes I have taught have also been my teachers, particularly the First Nations students. As co-advisor, I just finished reading a graduating paper by N'kixw'stn James[1] (2001) about her own journey of healing (and that of her community) from the 'soul sickness of residential schools' and have learned much about spirituality, dreaming and community rituals. I am learning from Dolores van der Wey[2], a PhD student in our department, about the possibilities and the conflicts between feminism and Indigenous worldviews. Dolores brings to my attention the need to work contextually, to consider women's roles and activities within Indigenous cultures from a view of balance, complementarity and reciprocity (see Allen, 1986; Smith,1999; Anderson, 2000).

> Unless those points are made clear they run the risk of being interpreted as gender oppression; of impeding an Indigenous understanding. And yet, having said this, it must be added that First Nations communities are not static, nor is there a unified female identity or a single female perspective. One might consider a "critical" conception of gender as the ideologically project of a repressively patriarchal hegemony especially in view of earlier commentary on the gendered nature of colonialism. To do so, though, would be to assume that all Indigenous peoples suffered the consequences in the same way, to the same extent, and that the struggles are all about the same things. (Van der Wey, 2001, p. 12)

Many of my teachers have been other Indigenous scholars. Winona LaDuke (1997, p. 23) writes about the necessity of finding home. "It is a challenge that people of this society face in belonging to a settler culture. They have been raised in this land, but they do not know its ceremony, its song, or its naming." She speaks about natural law and the state of bal: nce as fundamental to Indigenous peoples. In this worldview most of the world is animate. She compares this with "industrial thinking" which is based on the belief that "... humans are entitled to dominion over nature" (p. 27). She also brings a fresh perspective on the notion of "skill" (a concept which dominates current policy discourse). She speaks about what a belief in an animate world means in relation to skill. "In our cultural practice ... it is not because of skill that a hunter can harvest a deer or a caribou; it is because he or she has been honorable and has given *asemah* (tobacco). That is how you are able to harvest, not because you are a good hunter but because the animal gives itself to you" (p. 26).

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[1] I have obtained permission from N'kixw'stn to reference her graduating paper.
[2] I have obtained permission from Dolores to reference her paper.

The writings of Fyre Jean Graveline (2000) have spoken powerfully about how her cultural practices have been essential to her resistance to the racism and backlash she has experienced as an instructor within the post-secondary system. "I am always unprepared for the backlash of White authority" (p. 286). Her wisdom about voice and silence have shifted my thinking about these key concepts that are central to feminist pedagogy. "Sometimes, giving Voice, giving voice to my identity, my politics, my Aboriginal consciousness, paradoxically can be a lesson in silencing of me or others" (p. 289).

Chrystos' poetry has taught me much about racism, violence and survival. In her fifth book of poetry "Fire Power" she says:

> Telling the truth is powerful medicine. It is a fire that lights the way for others. Truth has always been forbidden by government, whose purpose is to exploit. When we speak our "Fire Power," we join a long & honored line of warriors against injustice. Do not bother to feel guilty if you life may seem less difficult than mine. Use your ease to make the lives of others easier. As I have, as many women & men & children have, you can make your life a weapon against exploitation. (Chrystos, 1995, p. 130)

Himani Bannerji (2000) has also helped me to understand the point that Michael is making about culture. In her critique of Charles Taylor's 1994 essay "The Politics of Recognition", she breaks into his smooth stylistics and what she calls his 'sweet reasonableness' to point out some deeply troubling and dangerous perspectives. What I find particularly useful in Bannerji's argument is how Taylor cannot see how he is implicated in the politics of difference. She writes:

> Because Taylor sees culture as separated from social relations, and discourses of power and difference as a sort of cultural diversity, and also lacks any theory of ideology or hegemony, he cannot see his own implication in the politics of difference. His ideological position and knowledge location are obscure to him, submerged as they are in his philosophical or metaphysical persona. By the same token he cannot identify what he considers as normal western culture as a hegemonic form of anglo-European culture. (p. 133)

Bannerji calls my attention to how domination and hegemony works and operates to create vision and hearing impairments in those members of the dominant anglo-European culture. She calls this "Eurocentric self-referentiality" and reminds us how easy it is to forget "... that there are differences which come as cultural legacies of the non-Europeans, and which are negatively interpreted irrespective of their actual content when they enter into societies pre-textured with colonial and imperialist relations and ideologies" (p. 147). She calls attention to what is at stake in demands for cultural rights and freedoms. "It is not a plea for recognition that "they" put forward, but rather a struggle to end exploitation and injustice" (p. 147).

**Endnote**

We hope this paper fits well with the foci of the CASAE 2001 conference which calls for efforts to reclaim and honor our stories and explorations of how adult education

can contribute to taking action on urgent questions of a suffering world. This paper explores some Indigenous resonances and some conflicts with dominant concepts of culture, power, and liberation as articulated in mainstream adult education academic discourse. It reflects how oral tradition has acted as a uniquely Native form of critical pedagogy and how First Nations community sensibilities are linked to relationships with the landscape and the local sense of place. Knowledge and power are, from the Native perspective, not transportable from the sacred, and local sense of place.

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# The Reading Strategies of Adult Basic Education Students

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**Abstract:** This large-scale SSHRC funded study examined the word identification and comprehension strategies of 344 adult basic education students enrolled in 58 full-time and part-time programs situated in urban and rural communities across Canada.

## Background to the Study

The reading behaviours, skills, and processes of adult literacy learners is a relatively new field of academic study, despite the ever-growing awareness of and support for adult literacy. A recent study examining the characteristics of research on reading between 1969 to 1998 found that only 3 percent of the research involved adults as research participants (Guzetti, Anders & Neuman, 1999). Over the last 16 years, a small body of research has been conducted on the reading strategies and processes of the adult population. However, some of this research is problematic because it focuses on phonological and orthographic skills, and has employed assessment procedures that do not reflect authentic reading (Hiebert, Valencia & Afflerbach, 1994). The major purpose of our study was to examine the word identification and comprehension strategies used by 344 adult basic education students.

## Methodology

*The Participants*

The participants in this study consisted of 344 adult basic students enrolled in 34 community colleges and school board programs and 24 community-based programs. These programs were situated in large communities (population greater than 65,000) and small communities (population less than 65,000) in Alberta, Ontario, the Northwest Territories, and Nova Scotia.

The participants were Canadian-born individuals whose mother tongue was English. There were 219 females and 125 males, and the average age of the participants was 33 years. The majority of the adults (71 percent) were full-time students attending adult basic education programs offered by colleges and school boards, while 7 percent were part-time students. The remaining adults (22 percent) were attending volunteer tutoring or community-based programs on a part-time basis. Adults ranged in reading levels from those at a beginning level to those who were able to read high school material with adequate comprehension.

*Data Collection*

We randomly assigned a set of two narrative and/or expository passages to each of the 344 students. We used passages from the *Canadian Adult Reading Assessment* (Campbell & Brokop, 2000), an informal reading inventory containing passages grouped into 9 levels, with increased difficulty based on factors such as length, number of questions, and readability (See Table 1). Modified versions of the Dale-Chall (Chall &

Dale, 1995) and Fry (1977) formulas were applied to establish the readability levels of each passage.

Table 1: Nature of Passages at each Level

| | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 | Level 8 | Level 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Word Length | 34-86 | 97-143 | 146-170 | 208-251 | 260-289 | 297-347 | 389-451 | 461-498 | 450-535 |
| # of Questions | 5-6 | 7 | 8 | 8-10 | 9-10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Readability | Grade 1 | Grades 1-2 | Grades 2-3 | Grades 3-4 | Grades 4-5 | Grades 5-6 | Grades 7-8 | Grades 9-10 | Grades 11-12 |

A team of 19 adult basic education instructors administered a set of 2 passages to each of the 344 students. Each student was asked to read the passage silently, and then orally. The instructor recorded the student's oral miscues as he/she read aloud. After the passage was read, the instructor recorded the student's retelling and asked him/her a set of comprehension questions. In order to be included in the study, the student needed to score between 65 and 90 percent on the comprehension questions.

In order to examine word identification strategies, we used miscue analysis. The students' oral miscues were analyzed using categories adapted from Goodman, Watson, and Burke (1996) and from the *Canadian Adult Reading Assessment* (2000) to determine whether readers used print and/or meaning to decode unfamiliar words. Each miscue was classified as print-based, meaning-based, integrative, or non-integrative. After each miscue had been classified, we calculated mean scores and standard deviations for each of the four types of miscues for students at each of the 9 reading levels.

In order to examine comprehension strategies, we collected 2 types of information: unaided retellings and answers to comprehension questions. After scoring each comprehension question, we compared the student's performance on inference vs. factual questions. Then, we calculated mean scores and standard deviations for each type of question for students at each of the nine reading levels.

## Results and Discussion

*Oral Reading Miscues*

There were few differences when we compared the adults' uncorrected miscues across the 9 reading levels (See Table 2). The results of MANOVA confirmed that these differences were either not significant or significant only at the .05 level ($F=1.58$, $p=.021$) for one of the randomly generated samples. From the descriptive statistics, it is clear that for adult literacy students at each of the 9 reading levels, the majority of uncorrected miscues were meaning-based or integrative while a small percentage of uncorrected miscues were print-based and non-integrative. Overall, this suggests that the beginning readers (Levels 1 to 3) were using reading strategies similar to those of the intermediate (Levels 4 to 6) and advanced readers (Levels 7 to 9).

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations for Uncorrected Miscues

| TYPE OF MISCUE | LEVEL | MEAN | S.D. | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Print-based | 1 | .15 | .17 | 40 |
| | 2 | .15 | .15 | 40 |
| | 3 | .10 | .15 | 40 |
| | 4 | .21 | .21 | 38 |
| | 5 | .13 | .12 | 34 |
| | 6 | .15 | .15 | 37 |
| | 7 | .13 | .12 | 39 |
| | 8 | .23 | .17 | 36 |
| | 9 | .14 | .16 | 40 |
| | Total | .15 | .16 | 344 |
| Meaning-based | 1 | .39 | .34 | 40 |
| | 2 | .39 | .27 | 40 |
| | 3 | .45 | .33 | 40 |
| | 4 | .39 | .25 | 38 |
| | 5 | .38 | .24 | 34 |
| | 6 | .43 | .22 | 37 |
| | 7 | .43 | .20 | 39 |
| | 8 | .36 | .19 | 36 |
| | 9 | .36 | .21 | 40 |
| | Total | .40 | .26 | 344 |
| Integrative | 1 | .33 | .26 | 40 |
| | 2 | .38 | .24 | 40 |
| | 3 | .39 | .29 | 40 |
| | 4 | .35 | .23 | 38 |
| | 5 | .42 | .20 | 34 |
| | 6 | .35 | .17 | 37 |
| | 7 | .37 | .16 | 39 |
| | 8 | .33 | .19 | 36 |
| | 9 | .45 | .22 | 40 |
| | Total | .38 | .22 | 344 |
| Non-integrative | 1 | .11 | .18 | 40 |
| | 2 | .08 | .13 | 40 |
| | 3 | .04 | .08 | 40 |
| | 4 | .05 | .08 | 38 |
| | 5 | .08 | .08 | 34 |
| | 6 | .07 | .06 | 37 |
| | 7 | .06 | .06 | 39 |
| | 8 | .08 | .08 | 36 |
| | 9 | .05 | .07 | 40 |
| | Total | .07 | .10 | 344 |

When results were combined across the 9 levels, the majority of miscues were meaning-based (40 percent) or integrative (38 percent) while a smaller percentage of miscues were print-based (15 percent), and even fewer were non-integrative (7 percent).

The discrepancy between proportions of meaning-based and print-based miscues suggests a greater reliance on knowledge than on print by adult literacy students at all levels of reading development. A relatively high percentage of miscues fell into the integrative category, which indicates that even beginning readers were able to use their knowledge and print cues *together* at least some of the time. In summary, the nature of the adults' uncorrected miscues across the 9 levels was very similar when mean scores were examined. However, the high standard deviation scores presented in Table 2 suggest considerable individual difference among adults within each reading level. It appears that differences in reading strategies used by adult *within* levels are greater than differences *across* levels.

**Question Data**

The results of the MANOVA indicated that there were significant differences across reading levels in the proportion of correct responses to factual and inference questions (F=3.8 to 4.79, p=.000). Post hoc tests revealed that the most consistent difference across the 3 randomly generated samples was on inference questions where adults at Level 1 were less successful in providing correct answers than were adults at other reading levels. Consistency in performance across other reading levels on both factual and inference questions is evident in the descriptive statistics presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations for Inference and Factual Questions

| | Level | Mean | S.D. | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factual | 1 | .86 | .09 | 40 |
| | 2 | .81 | .12 | 40 |
| | 3 | .78 | .11 | 40 |
| | 4 | .84 | .13 | 38 |
| | 5 | .77 | .12 | 34 |
| | 6 | .78 | .08 | 37 |
| | 7 | .77 | .12 | 39 |
| | 8 | .79 | .09 | 36 |
| | 9 | .81 | .11 | 40 |
| | Total | .80 | .12 | 344 |
| Inference | 1 | .63 | .18 | 40 |
| | 2 | .76 | .12 | 40 |
| | 3 | .78 | .11 | 40 |
| | 4 | .74 | .13 | 38 |
| | 5 | .79 | .09 | 34 |
| | 6 | .75 | .10 | 37 |
| | 7 | .74 | .16 | 39 |
| | 8 | .78 | .11 | 36 |
| | 9 | .82 | .10 | 40 |
| | Total | .75 | .13 | 344 |

The results on answers to questions confirm that adults at all levels of reading development were able to use both text information and background knowledge to construct meaning from what they read. However, as indicated on the post hoc tèsts, adults at Level 1 made less effective use of knowledge-based than text-based information. They were able to answer correctly 86 percent of factual questions correctly, as compared to 63 percent of inferential questions. This may be more a reflection of how they were taught in literacy classes than of their ability to make inferences, since they did not differ in their ability to make inferences from adults at higher reading levels on the retelling task. Perhaps Level 1 students had developed expectations about *how* to answer questions from their experiences in beginning literacy classes, but they hadn't developed expectations about *how* to retell a passage. Traditionally, educators have assumed that making inferences is a higher-level task than is comprehending details (e.g., Bloom, 1956) and that beginning readers will have difficulty with inferential tasks. Hence, educators may not ask many inference questions or teach beginning readers how to answer this type of question. As a result, adults at the beginning stages of literacy development may have developed the expectation that questions asked following the reading of passages will require them to recall details from the text, rather than to use their knowledge along with text to draw inferences.

**Implications**

Overall, the results on the miscue and comprehension tasks indicate that adults at all stages of literacy development are able to make effective use of their knowledge as they read. This suggests that programs emphasizing and reinforcing use of knowledge to identify words and construct meaning are appropriate for adult literacy students from the beginning to the advanced stages of literacy proficiency. The results of this study do not support literacy programs that stress strategies for processing print information prior to focussing on meaning. The advantage of literacy programs that emphasize use of knowledge-based information is that instruction begins with what adults bring to programs—what they already know—rather than with what they did not know. This does not mean that strategies for processing print should be neglected. However, the goal of an effective literacy program is to help readers to integrate reading strategies rather than to rely excessively on any one strategy.

The results of this study support integrated programs for all adult literacy students. However, this does not mean that there is no need for individualization of instruction for adult literacy students or that "one size fits all." The large standard deviations, particularly evident in the miscue data, imply that there are significant differences in reading strategies among adults within every level of reading proficiency. Hence, while integrated programs will be appropriate for all adults, the relative emphasis on print-based, text-based, and knowledge-based strategies will vary depending on the needs of specific individuals. For those who rely too heavily on print-based cues, there needs to be a heavier focus on meaning. For those who rely so heavily on their knowledge that the meanings they construct bear little resemblance to that intended by the author, there needs to be a heavier focus on strategies for processing print and text information. This will require that literacy instructors teach diagnostically and that they have an effective diagnostic tool to assess the needs of their students. Informal reading inventories are an appropriate diagnostic tool to help instructors observe how adults read in the actual reading situation. The *Canadian*

*Adult Reading Assessment* (Campbell & Brokop, 2000) has been designed to serve this function in the Canadian context.

Finally, the fact that there were few differences in reading strategies used by adults at different levels of reading proficiency implies the need for a spiral rather than sequential curriculum. Print-based, text-based, and knowledge-based strategies can be taught to adults at every level of literacy development. It is not necessary to begin with print, and then move to a focus on text and knowledge-based information. It is the level and complexity of material that needs to change as adults develop increasing reading proficiency, rather than the focus of strategy instruction.

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# Feminist Artist-Educators and Community Revitalisation: Case Studies from Toronto

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**Abstract**: This paper examines two community arts projects in Toronto. In particular, it discusses the dynamic role of the arts and the feminist artist-educators, whose guidance, knowledge and creativity enhance the cultural learning experience.

## Introduction

Innovative pedagogies can help to facilitate the learning that must occur to meet the complex and multi-layered challenges women face on a daily basis (Bell and Williams, 1998; Von Kotze,1996). As women attempt to make sense of and create meaning in today's world, working with and through symbolic forms can stimulate critique, and collective power, knowledge and creativity by developing a common space of choice, control and imaginative learning. Community arts are symbolic forms of an imaginative, participatory approach to personal and social transformation. They "invite us to tell our story...to listen to the stories of those around us...to celebrate who we are together" (Overton, 1994, p.94).

Feminist artist-educators working collectively with communities provide new paradigms for comprehending and valuing art, promoting consciousness and imagination, raising the status of women's art in society, and involving women directly in artistic processes that are life-enriching (Collins and Sandle, 1984; La Duke, 1985). Their involvement in community learning enhances the cultural, intellectual, educational experience. Among many other things, they are able to demonstrate the impact of artworks on the way women think, understand, learn and make changes in their own lives and communities. This paper explores two community arts initiatives in Toronto. "In the Hood" was sponsored by the Laidlaw Foundation. The Feminist artist-educators used women's crafts as artistic expressions to overcome feelings of isolation, create a sense of community and transform 'place'. "According to Us", sponsored by Central Neighbourhood House, engages women in photographic explorations of violence, poverty, and mobilisation. The studies illuminate how learning is directly facilitated through the arts and the dynamic and multi-dimensional roles of the arts and feminist artist-educators.

## Feminist Artist Educators, Crafts and Photography

Feminist adult educators have used the arts to make visible the 'invisible' of women's experiences, knowledge and creativity, to celebrate, to question white privilege, to connect personal and political issues through the imagination, to enhance literacy learning, and as a weapons of protest (Bell and Williams, 1998; Clover, 2001; Roy 2000; Von Kotze, 1996).

Walker and Walker (1987, p.27) argue that "craftwork performed by women within a domestic setting has been done for love and for creative need, and also for domestic economy: it is an aesthetic survival." For centuries, "women have communicated through craft activities, developed relationships" and have been transformed"(Larvin and Pooley, 1987, p.11). But their crafts have been relegated to the ranks of 'low' art since "the argument goes that if 'it' is seen in a museum, gallery or art magazine, then it is art" (Lippard, 1984, p.78) and women's 'arts'

seldom find a place in these bastions of esthetic truism. Women's knitting circles are referred to as "women's gossiping circles - in other words, triviality, domesticity, non-seriousness" and other forms of craftwork as occupations for 'spare' time (Russell and Barnett, 1987, p.66).

However, women's crafts are more than 'decoration that is superficial or inferior. "Pattern and decoration can be 'read' in many different ways; the signs, symbols and knits of patterns have as interesting and varied a history and iconography as any other art form. (Ibid.:66). Feminist artist-educators recognise women's crafts as forms of artist expression and provide imaginative and fertile ground through which they can emerge and be represented publically.

Photography enjoys the ranks of 'acceptable' or 'high' art, adorning the walls of galleries and museums world-wide. It has also been recognised and accepted "by most regional arts associations and for grant-aid" (Adkins 1981:152). However, community photography by 'non-professionals' still does not fair well in the hierarchy of 'art'. Nevertheless, this artistic form is an important tool of feminist artist-educators to document local history and socio-political concerns such as Martha Rolsers photographic work in the late 1970s where she produced a series of prints on "the pollution of the Love Canal in the United States" (Bell and Williams 1998:131). Women's photography often represents a 'site specific art, unearthing forms of alienation, fragments of lives, putting them together into a cohesive visual experience" (Lippard 1984:272).

**In the Hood**

A fitting framework for this project is articulated through a quotation by Aroko and Farkas (2000:1): "While art cannot completely solve many social dilemmas, it can solve one problem: The loneliness of spirit." "In the Hood" was located in the culturally diverse Oakwood and Vaughan neighbourhood of central Toronto. In her one report (1999:1) to the Foundation. artist-educator Elizabeth Cinello stated: "The boarded up storefront windows in the neighbourhood are an interesting metaphor for the community itself. What normally is wide open and designed to facilitate seeing, is instead covered, hidden and neglected. The richness, diversity and colour of the hood's culture is unseen, ignored and invisible, except as a stereotype in the media."

Many women in Toronto create crafts. They knit, sew or crochet but most often keep the products for themselves, their family or friends: the 'private' domain. In 1999 feminist artist-educators from the neighbourhood developed a community arts process to bring together women to combat isolation and disconnection, make visible their cultural crafts as 'artistic practices' and use these to transform the 'public' spaces of women's 'private' work and "an ugly, drab and soulless streetscape." Artist-educator Jo Anne Atherly describes the project as: "about bringing art to the community; about investment in the arts and each other; about being able to recognise each other on the street; about recognising our different talents; about us."

The artistic expressions used were: A) a giant collectively knitted slipper; B) small individual fantasy slippers around which personal stories were woven; C) the transformation of one Laundromat's unsightly interior into a work of art through poetry and paint; and D) the creation of Designer Laundry Bags adorned with words, symbols, found objects and imagination. These creations have been exhibited around the neighbourhood transforming women's relationships to 'place' and their ideas of their crafts. One woman said she "liked the idea that this is a community project where women of different ages, backgrounds and talents could work together to create a product. Like taking an everyday thing like a knit slipper and making it into 'art'." Another woman had been afraid in the Laundromat until the paint and poetry went up.

The women participated in "In The Hood" for four inter-connected reasons. The first was theraputic. Many women saw it as opportunity to get "away from the hum drum of daily life...away from the day-to-day problems, even if just for awhile." The second was to meet others and overcome feelings of isolation and disconnection: "I live alone, you see. And I get lonely. You can't just watch TV all the time". The third was the "opportunity to meet the people you may see often on the street and to be creative together, not just doing laundry and buying groceries." The final reason was the arts themselves and the opportunity to work with artist-educators: "Now that I have learned [from the artists]....I would plan the theme for my slipper better. I would do two slippers - one to express the impromptu, untamed side of me and the other a more 'cultivated slipper' to express the calmer, aesthetic and intellectual side."

Women involved in the project learned everything from how to make paper out of dryer lint to the amazing number of "like-minded people who want[ed] to come together and promote the arts". Others acquired the "confidence to come out and teach people how to knit and crochet" and "not to be afraid to try something new, to experiment." The project highlighted the cultural practices of the neighbourhood, improved the street-scape and raised a part of women's everyday life to 'art'.

**According to Us**

'According to Us' is a group of women who chose "the medium of photography to explore issues such as poverty and violence against women, tell their stories of their communities [and] as a tool for social change" (Central Neighbourhood House, 2000:1). It is a component of Central Neighbourhood House's (CNH) Women's programme. CNH is a community based multi-service agency in downtown Toronto. The Women's programme includes areas such as advocacy, community development, and anti-discriminatory adult education. The women involved are culturally diverse: Philippina, Metis, Caribbean, and white skinned. They have all faced poverty, homelessness, violence, mental illness and/or physical disability.

The women chose photography because, "We can't draw!", but particularly because many had "always loved taking pictures". Not far into the process, they discovered, as articulated by feminist artist-educator Jennifer LaFontaine, "that they didn't know very much about photography [so] they advertised for a [professional] to work with them and that's where I came onto the scene." Their collective photographic exhibit titled "Portraits of Resistance: Celebrating Women's Lives" was displayed at the March of Women showcase at the Canadian National Exhibition and other community centres and galleries around Toronto. They have also created a calendar using images of diverse women "who inspire us, who challenge us" and from the International Women's Marches in Ottawa and New York.

The artist-educator came with the idea of teaching the women to use manual cameras but she noted that there was resistance and they seemed more comfortable "with the point and shoot as art." While the artist learned that it was possible from the women to "tell their stories...and learn to see [things] differently without fancy cameras", the women's confidence grew and within a short period they "wanted to use manual cameras". The women have also learned "how to develop their own photos in the darkroom", although many insist they hate that part until the moment "you begin to see the picture emerge, well, the finished product is worth it." They have also learned more about violence and oppression from the women they documented, and have acquired an 'artistic' eye in terms of analysing photographs. A self-identified painter felt that

being part of the group had not only been theraputic but "taking photographic images and really looking at them in terms of social issues has impacted on my painting."

The women have gained a great deal from interacting with each other and consider the work to be entirely collective which is why they do not assign their names to the photos. The photos in the calendar were all chosen collectively and this process was a powerful learning experience as told by one: "[she] chose a certain photograph and I thought that is the last one I would choose so I asked her 'why did you choose that one?' She said, 'do you see all those women walking with their heads down? I've walked all my life with my head down.' Without her I would have gone right by that picture and never understood what it was really about. You cannot understand community photography any other way." In so many ways, the working together, "with its ups and downs has been very empowering". There is a real collective power, a strength that comes from creating the art. The women continue to meet regularly and challenge themselves to move forward and create. Collectively, they have found a "path to creativity, healing, and resistance through art."

The art itself provides the women with a larger audience. As the artist noted, "These women are not people who are powerful in the world. People do not listen to them do speeches. It's not that they don't know the issues, it's just that people don't listen. This is a way for them to speak and for people to hear them where they would not usually have a voice and people wouldn't usually listen. Plus, they do beautiful work. This in itself is powerful....Isn't that what feminism is about?"

**The Roles of the Arts and the Feminist Artist-Educators**

This short space cannot do justice to the many roles played by both the art and the Feminist artist-educators so only a few are outlined and are explained primarily through the words of the artists and participants.

Making art, making things, and perceiving those made, makes connections to experiences we have in life. Creativity is sparked by boundaries and finds satisfaction in new connections across boundaries. The creation of artistic products allowed the participants to find their own but also a collective expression. The artistic process allowed for the creation of a personal and social knowledge to emerge upon which understandings and could be built: "It felt good for me to do the portraits because these are women like us. They weren't anybody on the TV that most people would know just by name-dropping. They are like us. They are hardworking women trying to make a change in society" (According to Us).

Creating a visible, tangible and beautiful icon is important. These projects are about both 'works of art' and the 'work of art' - maintaining an important balance between the two. The production of artistic products leaves active images. The fantasy slippers and the photographs are reinterpreted each time they are seen on display. This seemingly magical quality of art, of life after the project is completed, commends the arts as unique tools for community transformation: "The art was the cultural practices of the neighbourhood, it improved the street-scape and made art a part of people's everyday life. The art made our heritage visible" (In the Hood).

Without stories we cannot grab things and hold them. Through the photographs and the slippers women were able to tell their stories and hear those of others. The artwork illustrated the stories of the lives of those involved and those who make up the larger community. Like illustrations in a book, the narratives of everyday life, the good and the bad, were conveyed through the art itself: "Some people expressed themselves, their problems through their art. If it was spiky, it was a rough day" (In the Hood).

Poems and pictures on the walls of the Laundromat, a gigantic knitted slipper and a photographic display draw people's attention making the art itself an important outreach tool: "At the women's march I was at the exhibit and so many women came to look at our display. Some stayed for a really long time. Some talked to me and others went through and actually read all the stories. That made me feel good. Our photos really had an impact." (According to Us).

Creating collective art is difficult and challenging and yet they are a vibrant way to bring together people across race, age, gender, ability and other traditional socio-economic barriers to work creatively towards common goals. The arts can have a 'neutralising' effect in terms of power and make 'visible' the invisible in society, giving voice and legitimising lives and dreams through a tangible, collective object of beauty: "sometimes through art you can better create trust. You are more vulnerable perhaps since it comes from the heart. Everyone is in the same vulnerable position"(In the Hood).

The feminist arts can emphasise how creativity belongs to the artist in every person and how all people are creators of art. They do not control the artistic process but rather put the verb of art into women's hands for intentional and effective use in everyday life, drawing out innate capacities, curiosities and artistic potential and steering that towards personal and social transformation: "The artists were there to guide us, but we were the artists. We made the things. We transformed the place." (In the Hood)

Participants speak of the power of the feminist artist-educator to demystify art and the artistic process. When art is seen as something that only is done by naturally born talents or those highly trained, the experience of seeing the artistic process as accessible and possible is empowering. The artist-educators also nurture the 'spirit' and thereby help women to acknowledge and honour the art they create, enriching their lives and building their confidence:"This one woman came up to me [at the women's march] and said "that is not a very good photograph. I am a professional so I know." But you know, we are good and that did not bother me. "So what?", I said"(According to Us).

The down-to-earth actions that result in art objects, the perceiving that brings such objects to life in us, and the impact artworks have on the way we think, understand, learn and make changes in our lives is highlighted by the artist-educator. They discuss art in new ways, pass along skills and ideas, conceptualise and bring together the ideas that come from a group. Bringing in a professional quality too has a major impact on the end result: "Working together [with the artist] meant it became a discussion about the artistic process, about artistic learning and about developing arts projects. I think about art differently now" (In the Hood).

The Feminist artist-educator makes the links between the arts and the community: "The artists were very talented and they knew the community - it is essential that they know the community" (In the Hood). They also use the art itself to deal with challenging situations: "When people made mistakes, and this woman... made mistakes on her pieces for the big slipper... the artist decided to make a 'story blanket'. She just improvised and used those pieces and others that were not correct. There was no 'wrong' that way." (In the Hood).

**Conclusion**

This article provides a brief look into the exciting an innovative feminist community arts work in Toronto. The projects emphasise that we can transform the quality of our daily living through the artistic learning process. To understand why women come together and use the arts as a vehicle for social and personal transformation, we need to understand what they care about and how they see their place in the world. It is this central activity of 'naming' that the feminist artist-educator so creativity nurtures. Feminist artist-educators engage women through but also

inside works of art. They engage imaginations, are catalysts for social action, and facilitators of the 'artistic' experience, minimising feelings of fear and inadequacy. They teach that to engage fully in the work of art, all you really require are the skills you already have.

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# Lifelong Learning in the New Economy: A Great Leap Backwards

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**Abstract**: The OECD Jobs Study report, written in 1994, presents a disturbing economic development strategy for use by its member countries. The concept of "lifelong learning" plays an important role in this strategy. This paper questions the direction advocated in the OECD report, explores the strategies that have been adopted in Canada, and suggests a role for adult educators to play to address issues of work.

## Introduction

The world of work is changing rapidly. Under the banner of "economic globalization" and the need to be competitive in the international economy, corporations have restructured to give their shareholders immediate profits. By automating their operations, they have eliminated hundreds of thousands of full-time jobs. In the process, the business rhetoric, using words like "re-engineered" "reorganized" and "de-layered," has depersonalized the victims of this new economy. Because of the popularization of this language, we now view workplaces from the perspective of management, as places that *must* be restructured if they are to compete globally (Finlayson, 1996).

Why has the workplace changed to such an extent? How did we get to this state? What role are adult educators expected to play in the "new economy"? Building on a review of the literature, this paper explores these questions. It looks at an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Jobs Study report advocating a regressive approach to job creation and training, describes how Canada has followed the path urged by this report and discusses the impact on unemployed and underemployed Canadians. It suggests a role for adult educators to play address the issue of work.

The term "economic globalization" refers to the transformation of the world's economies into a *world* economy, placing the interests of transnational corporations ahead of those of individual nations. It has changed the lives of workers everywhere.

Jobs are being dramatically restructured, creating a highly polarized workforce. At one end are highly skilled, well-paid professionals, semi-professionals and tradespeople with relatively stable jobs; at the other end, people in both blue and white collar work stalled in unskilled, low-paying, casual or part-time jobs, eking out an existence that is far from secure.

We live in a society of growing extremes—extremes that have widened dangerously since the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States in 1989. During this time, corporations and the wealthy have been given huge tax breaks to help them become globally "competitive," while, at the same time, the rate of child poverty has increased 49%. An alarming 19.8% of Canadian children now live in poverty (Campaign 2000). In 1980, there were no food banks in Canada. There are now an estimated 2,000 and the number of people needing them for basic survival continues to grow (Jackson & Robinson, 2000)—more than 800,000 Canadians now rely on donated food for part of every month (Food bank, 1999/2000). Angus Reid (1996), who heads up one of Canada's largest polling firms and has written a strong critique of the new economy and its impact on Canadians, argues:

> What the new economy is producing is job insecurity, longer working hours, a surplus of labour, more part-time workers, a social safety net full of holes and the potential for growing income disparities between the rich and the poor. (p. 190)
> Workplace change has happened so quickly, that few of us realize its extent.

Canada now has a system in which workers at the top seem to be rewarded with large salary increases while workers lower down are expected to be grateful just to have a job. The polarization of work into "good jobs" and "bad jobs" is transforming our society. Many Canadians accept this polarization and the widening gap between the working rich and the working poor as inevitable, as something beyond our control.

**OECD Jobs Study Report**

A 1994 Jobs Study report from the OECD proposes a draconian economic development strategy – a strategy that clearly has been followed in Canada. The authors believed that member OECD countries had not responded "appropriately" to the demands of economic globalization and challenged them to "strengthen the capacity to adjust to rapid change" (p. 29). The report states that employment protection policies and practices of governments, unions and businesses in member countries have decreased their countries' ability and will to adapt to change. It disparages the growth of public sector jobs in the 1970s, claiming it led to the diminishment of "the incentive to accept work—particularly low-paying or precarious work" (p. 30). In addition, it says, low-wage jobs were "disallowed by society, whether through state-imposed or union-negotiated wage/income floors and employment protection" (p. 30) and these practices have impacted negatively on a country's ability to "adapt" to the new global economy.

The Jobs Study report presents a two-pronged challenge: to examine social policies of member countries for the extent to which "each may have contributed to ossifying the capacity of economies and the will of societies to adapt: and then to consider how to remove those disincentives"(pg. 30). It favours creation of jobs only in the private sector, and in two distinct streams: skilled jobs which would have high knowledge requirements; and low-wage jobs which would "absorb significant numbers of low-skilled unemployed workers" (p. 33).

The OECD document describes ways to ensure workers are desperate enough to take "low-paying and precarious" jobs. For example, in a section titled "*Disincentives to Hiring.*" the report calls for changes in attitudes and practices, especially in the areas of taxation, social policy and collective bargaining. It advocates cuts to social spending, and explores ways to increase the hiring of low-wage workers such as lowering minimum wages, reworking employment-protection legislation and lowering trade barriers. All of this is built upon the unquestioned ideological assumption that member countries "must adjust to changing circumstances" (p. 36), meaning corporate globalization.

This assumption--that OECD countries and their citizens must adapt to the demands of the corporate elite--goes unchallenged by governments, the business community and the news media. It is accepted as a given, as an inevitable part of progress—a testament to the effectiveness of an ongoing and well-orchestrated corporate public relations strategy.

**Structural Adjustment in Canada**

In the prosperous postwar period of the late '40s and '50s, Canada developed a number of income and social security programs to prevent a return to the abject poverty that so many Canadians experienced during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Canada Assistance Plan,

the Canada Pension Plan and the Unemployment Insurance program were designed to be a social safety net to help all Canadians meet a minimum standard of living.

With the introduction of the North American free trade agreements, there has been a dramatic social restructuring in Canada. In order to "compete in the global economy" and to have a "level playing field" with the U.S., Canada's social programs have been slashed to "harmonize" with those of the U.S. We have seen massive spending cuts to basic social and economic development programs, including health, education and housing--cuts that have seriously injured many Canadians. With the elimination of the Canada Assistance Plan in 1996 and the massive cuts to health, education and social services, the federal government launched an outright attack on social spending.

Broad (2000) speaks of the rapid shift to the lean state in the 1990s. He discusses the renewed attacks on labour and, in particular, on public sector workers, the restructuring of social programs and a reduction of the welfare state. By restricting access to social programs and cutting social assistance and unemployment insurance benefits, Canada, clearly, has implemented parts of the OECD Jobs Report. As a direct result of our shredded social safety net, many people now find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle, of low-wage contingent jobs, from which they cannot escape.

**The Role of Lifelong Learning**

The OECD Jobs Study, which advocates creating and entrenching a two-tiered jobs system that would widen the gap between the working rich and the working poor, sees "lifelong learning" as central to the process of increasing the skills of those in the high-wage tier. The OECD concept of lifelong learning is limited, however, to learning specifically for jobs; the study argues that "vocational and academic studies should both prepare and stimulate students for entrepreneurial activities" (p. 38). The educational needs or interests of the worker are irrelevant. Learning is an investment in business and in the economies of member countries. It is clear that business interests have hijacked the concept of lifelong learning. The following "business-speak" says it all:

> A more radical solution would be reforms to accounting standards which could help improve information on the value of training investments, as would agreed upon, and implementation of, training standards and credentials. This would enable financial markets to account for the stock of workforce skills in a firm as part of recorded assets, in turn encouraging investors to invest in firms with proven track records in training their workforces. (OECD, 1994, p. 38)

Unfortunately, in Canada, adult education seems to be following this path. Adult education in this country has a rich history and, in the past, covered a broad spectrum of activities (Selman, Cooke, Selman & Dampier, 1998; Welton, 1987). With the onset of corporate globalization, however, HRD has gained considerable prominence.

I believe there are problems with adult educators aligning themselves so closely to an HRD strategy in the new economy as it eschews traditional adult education values by looking at the world through the narrow lens of business and the powerful, rather than that of the broader society. Organizational HRD approaches tend to further polarize the workforce by helping people who already have skills move into higher positions and ignores those who most need training. This widens the gap between the working rich and the working poor and reinforces an

unjust system that is wreaking havoc on the lives of people worldwide. As well, adult education becomes a service industry, serving the needs and interests of business. We become part of the corporate world.

The ideology of retraining is predicated on the idea that there is plenty of work and that retrained workers will easily find jobs. This is a false understanding of the new economy and the types of jobs that are being created, and makes it easy to see the unemployed and underemployed as being responsible for their own misfortune. Such a blame-the-victim argument reinforces and legitimizes the inequities within the system.

Reid (1996) argues that, while some jobs go begging due to a lack of skilled workers, this is not the norm. In essence, it "doesn't matter how willing, or how trained, workers are if improved technology and a global marketplace are creating a society in which there will not—cannot—be enough decent jobs to go around" (pp. 192-193). The problem is not one of skill shortages, but a "highly educated workforce chasing fewer and fewer jobs that actually demand high levels of qualifications" (Jackson & Robinson, 2000, p. 48). Thus, many people are unemployed and underemployed, not because they lack skills, but because there are too few jobs.

This takes us back to the OECD report that clearly recognizes that there will be some high-paying jobs and many low-paying contingent jobs. Because there will never be enough "good" jobs to go around, the main strategy of the OECD for reducing unemployment is to promote the growth of the low-wage jobs by reducing wages and eliminating social supports, effectively forcing people to take them.

**Role for Adult Educators**

Often we talk about the need for adult educators to be "political," and assume that we have a common understanding of the term. Cevero & Wilson (1999) identify two explicitly political perspectives that adult educators tend to take: the pragmatic perspective (the political is practical: the ability to get things done) and the structural analysis perspective (the political is structural: redistributing power). It is clear to me that the problems that we face in the new economy are structural and, consequently, it is important to work from a structural perspective.

Society is being restructured into two distinct groups of people – the "winners" and the "losers." It is not by chance that we are becoming a polarized society. We are living in a class system and that the elite are structuring the new economy in a way that will most benefit them. They have created a form of Social Darwinism--a survival-of-the-fittest, winner-take-all society. As adult educators, we need to ask ourselves if we want to support this type of a system. Whose interests are we furthering? What are the ethics of what we are being asked to do? We need to develop a clear understanding of how society is changing. Without this, as Miles (1998) argues, adult educators can "unknowingly become tools in the implementation of unjust policies and...complicit with the destructive neo-liberal agenda" (p. 253).

Korten (1996) argues that change has happened so quickly, few of us realize its extent. He believes we must begin to explore alternative visions of society and identifies the biggest barrier to change as the lack of public discussion and debate on the subject. The public has been bombarded with slogans like "we have no alternative" and thus has not engaged in any meaningful debate on the future of work. Finlayson (1996) believes that people have not challenged the dominant agenda because they are frightened by the changes that are transforming the workplace. She argues that the corporate agenda has:

> Caused us to believe that we are losing all control over the forces that govern our lives. It has also caused us to believe that our politicians are paralysed by circumstances, and have no real choices on economic policy. It has caused us to believe that our society has no real choices, that we are in the midst of an economic cataclysm that we have no hope of mitigating. (p. 70)

McQuaig (1998), too, speaks of the image of government impotence that has been carefully crafted by big business. She argues that governments do have "autonomy to pursue policies aimed at full employment and well-funded social programs" (p. 255), but they must make choices. To date, they seem to be unwilling to make such choices and, instead, hide behind the "free market" ideology. Finlayson (1996) adds:

> In the last decade or so, Canadians have been denied the opportunity to engage in calm, thoughtful—and genuinely inclusive—discussions of how best to solve the workplace problems that confront us now and those that will confront us in the twenty-first century. In accepting the proposition that market forces alone should determine the way we live our lives and organize our society, we have also accepted the proposition that there is really nothing to discuss. (p. 202)

It is important for adult educators to educate and help organize around the issue of work and the new global economy that is adversely affecting so many Canadians. We need to encourage discussion and debate around the direction Canada is taking and should be involved in organizing around social policy issues. The federal government has joined with other OECD countries in following the path advocated by the OECD Jobs Study report, a neo-conservative path designed to benefit the wealthy at the expense of ordinary people. Adult educators need to raise questions about this direction and explore its consequences for society. We can do this both in our classrooms and through the development of educational programs and public forums in the broader community.

**Conclusion**

Canada is becoming a highly polarized country: some people have benefited greatly in the new economy, many others have become trapped in a vicious spiral of poverty. This type of polarization is wrong—it is bad for society in general and it is bad for the people trapped in low-wage work specifically.

Education has often been considered a "great equalizer" in our society. Ironically, education now tends to increase the polarization between the working rich and the working poor. The "haves" get more while the "have nots" are tossed aside. And adult educators are being asked to support the inequitable distribution of wealth by buying into the human resource development model of lifelong learning.

Korten (1996) says, "we are caught in a terrible dilemma. We have reached a point in history where we must rethink the very nature and meaning of human progress" (p. 29). Adult educators have a clear role to play in this process, if they so choose. There are many issues around work and the changing workplace that must be opened for public discussion and debate. It is important to help people understand what is at stake with the changes that are taking place in the new economy.

We need to look at the corporatisation of Canada and explore how studies conducted by organizations like the OECD impact on our everyday work lives. These organizations and their supporters hold a tremendous amount of power—and it is power that is being used to support the wealthy.

As adult educators, we need to draw on our past successes and look for ways to engage people in a public discussion about the kind of world Canadians want to see. We need to explore democratic options and lobby governments to ensure that citizens, not corporations, have control over the direction that Canada pursues.

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## Contribution à la Réflexion Andragogique sur «L'Économie du Savoir»

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*On se lasse de tout, excepté d'apprendre* (Virgile, 70 –19 av. J.-C.). Que représente l'éducation des adultes dans le contexte de la mondialisation? Écris à quelques semaines du Sommet des Amériques, ce texte est motivé par l'occurrence croissante des expressions « formation continue », « société du savoir » et « économie du savoir » à l'intérieur des médias et il ne prétend à rien d'autre que de contribuer à une réflexion sur la position andragogique au regard des enjeux mis en lumière par les récentes réformes en éducation qui traduisent des priorités d'action (diplomation et accès à la formation pour le plus grand nombre) que le Québec partage avec d'autres sociétés démocratiques telles la France et les États-Unis.(1)

### Nouvelle donne éducative

Qu'implique, pour la pratique andragogique, le mariage entre « économie » et « savoir »? Est-ce l'annonce d'un marché de la formation qui se subordonne à l'économie? (2) Les andragogues ont-ils des responsabilités spécifiques face aux apprenants adultes dans l'« économie du savoir »? Il est sans doute casse-cou d'aborder le sujet de l'éducation des adultes dans l'économie du savoir avec seulement quelques pages devant soi. L'andragogie n'en demeure pas moins notre domaine puisqu'elle s'intéresse à toutes les questions théoriques et pratiques qui touchent l'éducation des adultes dans toutes leurs manifestations et leurs formes d'expression, qu'elles soient formelles ou informelles, organisées ou auto-dirigées et elle étudie les facteurs politiques, économiques, culturels, physiques, psychologiques et sociaux qui influencent le développement de l'apprenant adulte, que l'activité éducative se déroule individuellement ou en groupe, par nécessité professionnelle ou par intérêt personnel.(3)

La démonstration que l'éducation et le développement humain sont étroitement liés n'est plus à faire; des efforts et des investissements accrus dans le domaine de l'éducation procurent clairement des avantages avérés dans de nombreux secteurs du développement humain. L'éducation des adultes est devenue un enjeu de société et deux indicateurs en témoignent; l'accroissement rapide de la participation des populations adultes et la multiplication des énoncés de politiques à travers le monde. Actuellement, 90% de la population qui sera adulte en l'an 2010 a déjà quitté l'école, soit la formation initiale. Or si l'on veut accroître la compétence de la population de l'an 2010, la seule voie possible passerait par l'éducation et la formation des adultes, puisque 90% des gens ont déjà quitté la formation formelle. Ce constat de l'OCDE, repris par beaucoup d'agences, souligne l'urgence d'accroître les compétences des adultes dans les différents champs du savoir.(4) L'évolution québécoise du champ éducatif des adultes s'inscrit dans une nouvelle logique de développement en réponse à la mondialisation des économies. La formation de base (dont l'alphabétisation et la francisation font partie) doit répondre à la pression exercée sur les individus quant à l'insertion ou la réinsertion socioprofessionnelle et la formation liée au marché du travail doit permettre aux personnes d'exercer des professions de plus en plus soumises aux normes nationales et internationales de compétences.(5) Le corollaire à la multiplication des exigences du marché de l'emploi serait la diversification des besoins en éducation. Les andragogues ont-ils un rôle spécifique à jouer auprès des apprenants adultes dans l'arrimage individus-qualifications-emplois?

**L'enjeu de la qualification professionnelle**

Le système d'enseignement postsecondaire constitue un cas unique car sa clientèle proviendra de tous les groupes d'âge. Il faudra composer avec les besoins en cours de recyclage et en ludoéducation d'une population vieillissante. La réduction des effectifs par les grandes entreprises influe de deux façons sur l'importance de ces besoins. D'abord, les « survivants » des exercices de réduction des effectifs devront enrichir leurs compétences et bénéficier de formation continue pour maintenir leur productivité, tout particulièrement à mesure que s'élargira le volet technologique de leur travail. Ensuite, les « victimes » des exercices de réduction des effectifs deviendront des consommateurs de formation puisque certains devront acquérir de nouvelles compétences pour décrocher un emploi ou pour se lancer à leur compte et d'autres inscriront l'acquisition de nouvelles connaissances au nombre des objectifs à poursuivre au moment de leur retraite.(6)

Il est de plus en plus question du « marché de la formation ». La formation continue ou l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie génère des enjeux de taille pour l'éducation dont les entreprises privées de formation semblent au fait et dont les principales cibles sont ceux qui aiment apprendre et qui y voient une forme de loisir, ceux qui aspirent à la mobilité professionnelle contraints par les besoins de l'industrie, ou qui s'ennuient (chômeur, retraité, etc.). Conjuguée à la dénatalité, la formation continue constituerait un marché potentiel pour les institutions désertées. Il ne fait nul doute qu'aujourd'hui, la formation des adultes constitue un morceau peu négligeable de la clientèle des universités. On voit des personnes du troisième âge obtenir des doctorats ou suivre des cours par simple plaisir. Les collèges et les universités sont-ils en mesure d'adapter leurs méthodes d'apprentissage et leurs politiques administratives pour répondre aux besoins d'étudiants adultes qui exigeront des niveaux de qualité et de service différents de l'étudiant de dix-neuf ans inscrit au baccalauréat? Ces institutions laisseront-elles au secteur privé le marché de l'éducation des adultes qui, à première vue, pourrait s'avérer lucratif?(7)

L'alternance études-travail est amorcée dans les entreprises, sous la supervision des établissements d'enseignement et un soutien grandissant est apporté à l'alphabétisation en entreprise, à la formation aux nouvelles technologies et aux nouvelles formes d'organisation du travail.(8) Des changements techniques rapides et radicaux signifient que le recyclage peut devoir être quasi continu, l'accès à l'éducation pour les travailleurs plus âgés devant se voir accorder une attention particulière. Par surcroît, de tels changements justifient une formation davantage axée sur les habiletés intellectuelles, accompagnée du perfectionnement constant des compétences des travailleurs. La transformation structurelle a ouvert des possibilités aux travailleurs qualifiés, mais elle a aussi engendré de l'instabilité, fait disparaître des emplois et rendu plus précaire la situation d'importants segments de la population. L'an dernier, environ 150 millions de travailleurs étaient en chômage et environ 300 millions étaient sous-employés.(9) De plus, la technologie n'oblige plus les étudiants à se rendre dans les cadres physiques des universités, par exemple, la Téluq, du Réseau de l'Université du Québec, permet chaque année à plus de 20 000 adultes de poursuivre des études supérieures sans avoir à se déplacer.(10)

Le concept « économie du savoir » est donc là pour durer. L'économie québécoise, comme celle des autres pays industrialisés, est de plus en plus tributaire de la production, de la diffusion et de l'utilisation du savoir.(11) Nous savons que la population québécoise vieillit et que cette tendance a des impacts sur le marché de l'emploi. Le Bureau de la statistique du Québec prévoit que la province va perdre un million de travailleurs d'ici 50 ans. À elles seules,

les carrières techniques et scientifiques représentent 14% du marché, une proportion qui ne cesse de croître. Selon le *Conference Board* du Canada, 177 000 emplois devraient voir le jour d'ici 2004 pour la seule région de Montréal. Combiné au vieillissement de la population : écoles et entreprises vont-elles manquer de jeunes?(12) Faut-il favoriser davantage l'immigration? Les économistes annoncent une pénurie de main-d'œuvre et il y aurait urgence d'agir puisqu'il n'est plus à démontrer qu'une main-d'œuvre instruite et qualifiée attire les investisseurs étrangers; l'investissement étranger, conjugué à la formation, crée un cercle « vertueux » de développement qui aide un pays à accroître sa compétitivité et encourage la production et l'emploi, au fur et à mesure que la technologie et la demande évoluent.(13) La mondialisation modifie de façon irréversible le sens de plusieurs notions dont celles d'État et d'éducation et la mondialisation économique draine une mondialisation de la pauvreté et une conscience sans précédent des inégalités. En contrepartie, les regards multiples sur les disparités ont contribué à l'inclusion de « l'éducation » au nombre des indicateurs mondiaux de la richesse sociale de l'OCDE. L'éducation et la formation demeurent des valeurs « économiquement » sûres.(14) Que peuvent faire les andragogues pour collaborer au maintien de cette richesse? La divergence entre les travailleurs sans diplôme secondaire et les travailleurs diplômés saute aux yeux. Des études établissent que pour chaque année additionnelle de scolarisation la production augmente de cinq à 15%. Plus est, avec les nouvelles technologies, la production repose non plus sur la force musculaire ou sur les machines, mais sur les ressources intellectuelles. La formation a d'énormes répercussions sur les salaires des travailleurs puisque le chômage frappe encore les moins scolarisés et facilite encore l'insertion professionnelle. Les andragogues ont-ils un rôle à jouer auprès des travailleurs exclus en raison de l'obsolescence de leurs compétences?

**La formation : levier économique et social**

L'objectif de scolarisation des adultes serait donc plus pertinent que jamais. Outre l'asservissement de l'humain à l'économie, le concept de société du savoir surgit dans la foulée anglo-saxonne de reddition des comptes que s'imposent les États. Le Québec n'y échapperait pas et du coup l'éducation, tout comme la santé, est soumise à l'évaluation comptable : Quel est le retour sur l'investissement en éducation?(15) L'engouement pour « les compétences » n'est pas universel et tous n'agréent pas avec l'équation *compétence = insertion sociale et professionnelle*. Certains auteurs font appel à la fonction « éthique » pour réguler le capitalisme sauvage; les penseurs soulèvent dorénavant l'ampleur des dérives à la mission éducative dont la hausse de conflits d'intérêts chez les chercheurs d'institutions qui sont avides de partenariats avec le secteur privé parce que c'est, semble-t-il, la façon d'administrer à la fois nécessaire et valorisée. Ainsi, la prégnance du concept « économie du savoir » aurait des ramifications multiples, dont certaines encore imprévisibles, dont la plus significative culturellement pourrait être la mutation lexicale en faveur d'un registre d'affaires lorsqu'il est question d'éducation et de formation, par exemple, la communauté du savoir et la concurrence à l'échelle mondiale appellent à faire davantage (16) et les universités cherchent à maintenir des standards d'excellence (17) pour soutenir la concurrence internationale, notamment dans le recrutement des meilleurs professeurs et chercheurs. Outre la question de la prestation de services éducatifs aux adultes, la notion de « société du savoir » aussi nommée « *économie du savoir* », interpelle un objectif parfois décrié : former et fournir de la « main-d'œuvre compétitive à l'industrie » plutôt que d'instruire intégralement des personnes, développer leur plein potentiel. L'éducation des adultes est-elle en proie à devenir un « bien de consommation »?

**L'éducation sort de l'école**

« Que chaque maison, baraque ou abri de fortune devienne un centre d'apprentissage » (Nelson Mandela) Apprendre par soi-même est une façon d'apprendre que privilégient certains apprenants par choix ou non. Les adultes apprennent en une multitude d'endroits : établissements d'enseignement publics spécialisés, écoles commerciales ou techniques privées, syndicats, associations professionnelles, groupes populaires, employeurs, fournisseurs de matériel spécialisé, bibliothèques, musées, sur les lieux du travail, à la maison avec ou sans ordinateur, dans les cafés Internet, n'importe où grâce à la vidéoconférence, etc. Cette diversité serait favorable (18) : la multitude des acteurs, des personnes formées, des formateurs et des lieux de formation ainsi que la diversification des modes de production évoquent l'idée d'un marché en concurrence. La diversification des lieux d'apprentissage est une autre tendance lourde : la formation continue, la mise à jour des compétences, le plaisir d'apprendre ne sont que quelques-uns des phénomènes contemporains qui contribuent à la diversification des lieux d'apprentissage. Cette nouvelle donne oblige-t-elle une réflexion plus approfondie sur la valeur des diplômes et la reconnaissance des acquis hors établissements?

L'accès à l'éducation pour des milliards d'humains passe nécessairement par le téléapprentissage : une question de coûts et une question l'accessibilité. C'est avec le traité de Maastricht (1992) que le développement de la formation à distance (FAD) devient un objectif majeur pour faire face aux défis de l'emploi et de la qualification. Dans un contexte où les besoins en éducation vont croissant, mais où les moyens financiers de l'État sont de plus en plus retreints, la formation à distance s'avérait une solution avantageuse compte tenu des économies qu'elle permet tout en contribuant de façon significative au développement de l'éducation au Québec. Près de 17 000 cours sont offerts mondialement par Internet dont quelques 2700 au Canada et ce nombre augmente sans cesse. Au Québec, la clientèle touchée annuellement par la formation à distance s'élève à environ 50 000 à 60 000 inscriptions-cours.(19) Au Québec, près de 100 000 personnes sont engagées dans des parcours de formation à distance. Elles le font principalement à travers trois établissements mandatés par le ministère de l'Éducation comme opérateurs aux trois ordres d'enseignement : la Société de formation à distance des commissions scolaires du Québec (SOFAD) intervient au secondaire; le Centre collégial de formation à distance (CCFD) couvre l'univers des cégeps; et la Télé-Université œuvre à l'ordre d'enseignement universitaire. La clientèle adulte en reconversion de carrière constitue une part importante de ce boom. Internet pourrait permettre de récupérer ces étudiants ayant souvent un emploi et des contraintes de temps. Dans plusieurs universités, la formation à distance est par ailleurs devenue un moyen essentiel pour rendre accessible la connaissance sur un grand territoire et les besoins de la développer davantage se manifestent partout à travers le monde.(20) La FAD est en plein essor mondialement mais son développement suppose un profond changement dans nos façons de former et de se former.(21) Quelle est la position des andragogues sur le potentiel de la formation à distance en éducation des adultes?

**Accéder au savoir et à l'économie mondiale**

L'école virtuelle c'est aussi la multiplication des valeurs communes et, dans un contexte de mondialisation, chaque nation a des valeurs à diffuser. Les universités les plus prestigieuses au monde dépensent des millions de dollars dans le nouveau créneau du téléapprentissage, des cours par Internet. Les nouvelles technologies de l'information vont-elles *réellement* révolutionner l'enseignement, entraîner des profits et faciliter l'accès à la formation à des milliers d'adultes partout sur la planète? Dans une perspective (sociale) de formation continue

des adultes et du développement du plein potentiel de chaque personne, les andragogues ont-ils des responsabilités spécifiques face aux apprenants adultes dans un contexte d'« économie du savoir »?

(1) Voir Ministère de l'éducation du Québec (MÉQ). « La scolarisation au Québec et dans les pays de l'OCDE », *Bulletin statistique de l'éducation*, 1999 : http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca; Voir OCDE. *Analyse des politiques d'éducation 1999*, Paris, OCDE; Voir Carnoy. *Globalization and educational reform: what planners need to know*, Paris, UNESCO, 1999; Voir MÉQ. *Pour une politique de l'éducation des adultes dans une perspective de formation continue*, 2000 : http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/REFORME/pol_adultes/index.html; Voir Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse, 1999 : http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca; Voir MÉQ. *Plan d'investissements universitaires du 1er juin 1000 au 31 mai 2004* : http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca; Voir Bélair. *L'éducation en 2025*, Ottawa, CRDI, 1999; Voir aussi Bond et Lemasson. *Un nouveau monde du savoir: les universités canadiennes et la mondialisation*, Ottawa, CRDI, 1999.

(2) Voir Guppy. *L'éducation au Canada: tendances récentes et défis à relever*, Statistiques Canada, 1998.; Voir Dumont, Langlois et Martin. *Traité des problèmes sociaux*, Québec, IQRC, 1995.

(3) D'après le programme d'Andragogie, Université de Montréal.

(4) Voir Bélanger. « Le nouveau contexte des politiques d'éducation et de formation des adultes », dans Hautecoeur, *Politiques d'éducation et de formation des adultes, Séminaire international de Québec, 29 novembre au 2 décembre 1999*, Québec, MÉQ et UNESCO, 2000.

(5) Voir Hautecoeur, op. cit.

(6) Voir Foot et coll. *Les tendances démographiques au Canada, 1996-2006*, Ottawa, 1998.

(7) Voir Foot, op. cit; Voir aussi Petrella. « La formation au futur : les pièges de l'économie de marché dérégulée » *Revue des sciences de l'éducation*, Vol. XXIII, no 1, 1997.

(8) Voir Hautecoeur, op. cit.

(9) Voir Bureau International du Travail (BIT), *Rapport sur l'emploi dans le monde 1998-1999*.

(10) Voir Harvey. *Pour une société en apprentissage*, IQRC, Québec, 1997.

(11) Voir Institut de la statistique du Québec. *Bulletin sur l'économie du savoir*, vol. 1, 2000.

(12) Voir Fontaine. « Emplois et sciences: l'arrimage manqué ? », *Interface*, Vol. 19, no 3, 1998.

(13) Voir Delors. *L'éducation. Un trésor est caché dedans*, Paris, UNESCO et Odile Jacob, 1996.

(14) Voir Petrella, op. cit.; Voir aussi Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse, op. cit.

(15) Voir Migué et Marceau. *Le monopole de l'éducation*, PUQ, 1989.

(16) Voir *Bulletin* du Centre interuniversitaire de recherche sur la science et la technologie (CIRST). « L'application de la Loi 95 », mai 1996.

(17) Voir Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ). *Quelques données et indicateurs significatifs sur le système universitaire québécois*, 2000.

(18) Voir Lemelin. *L'Économiste et l'éducation*, PUQ, 1998.

(19) Voir Comité de liaison de la formation à distance (CLIFAD) : http://www.ccfd.crosemont-ac.ca/.

(20) Voir Dionne et Deschênes. « La recherche sur le matériel pédagogique pour la formation à distance », ACFAS, 1997; Voir aussi Association canadienne de l'éducation à distance (ACÉAD). *L'apprentissage ouvert et la formation à distance au Canada*, 1999 : http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.qc.ca.

(21) Voir Jacquinot. « Apprivoiser la distance et supprimer l'absence? », *Revue Française de Pédagogie*, no 102, 1993.

**Adult Literacy as Social Relations:**
**A Democratic Theorizing**

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**Abstract**: A theory for democratic literacy — not studying literacy workers and learners but explicating literacy as what they work in the midst of — can build on a conception of literacy as social practices and relations, always in motion.

This paper attempts to articulate the shape of a theory for democratic adult literacy work. I do not mean "democratic" only in a distributional sense, viewing literacy as a social good that should be equitably distributed. I mean it also in a strategic sense — aimed to develop people's capacities for conscious participation in society. This democratic aim is a continually animating force in literacy work — although the mandate of the regime promoting literacy is the development of "human resources," i.e. people's capacities understood as resources for the operations of dominant institutions.

I do not mean "theory" here as categories and formulae that conceptualize what we'll find, prior to going and looking, but as a set of orienting concepts, directing our attention, telling us how and where to look in order to see how it works. Theory for democratic literacy work will stand, distinctively, among people, as a knowledge *for* learners, literacy workers, and other democratic activists, not *about* them. It will be in dialogue with their own knowledge of literacy as what they're working in the midst of, and working to develop. It will offer not a set of findings, but a way of finding, a method for discovery. I offer here a selective reading (not a synthesis or exegesis) of several forms of theory, to cull from them tendencies useful for this democratic project.

Since democratic theory seeks dialogue *with* people *about* and *in* the literacy they do, it will consider literacy *as* how people do, and what they do through, uses of written material. This starting point in the activity of actual individuals is crucial for thinking in a way that is aligned with people's own development. Since individuals do not do literacy alone, democratic theory will recognize literacy not merely as individual capacities but as social — both as social conventions that people acquire, and also as actions that they do together, or to coordinate with one another, in courses of social action. Theory will deal with the two-sidedness of this "participation" — with literacy that serves as people's own resource, to carry their knowledge and projects; and with literacy that carries other people's power, and so stands apart from people's own aims and shaping.

Democratic theory must orient to different "levels" of literacy. There is the scribal level of activities on and with written words. There is a level at which people interact over texts, or about their content. There is a level at which texts are elements of processes of communication and knowledge that operate across situations. All the levels arise in and bear upon literacy work itself. Different theoretical resources shed light on different levels.

## Skills Theories

The dominant theory in the regime promoting adult literacy formulates literacy as skills. Its core conceptual procedure, rooted in psychology, objectifies literacy. It cuts out procedures

of reading or writing from actions people take, and treats these as an entity consisting of decontextualized (usually "mental") processes having uniform characteristics, underlying diverse particular contexts. This kind of theory, abstracting literacy from contexts, is often called "autonomous," in Street's influential term.

Skills theories are dominant in public policy and in program accountability in two senses. In the regulation of programming, literacy is seen as a graded attribute of individuals — underlying what they do and transferable between milieux. Skills theory also fits into an array of discourses concerned with the governance of training and the labour market. Skills theory takes for granted some domain of institutional social relations — whether economic or scholastic — and "skills" then appear when it is asked whether people have abilities to perform the tasks required in this domain. The pinnacle of current skills theory, in the International Adult Literacy Survey, is tailored specifically to policy making for adult literacy within the developing "competitiveness" of global capitalism (with its rapid changes in both markets and methods of organizing production). The (IALS) information-processing metaphor for literacy is informative about the dominant literacy of institutions as a shunting back and forth of information, which individuals can step into and perform. But it doesn't provide tools for discovering or showing what social processes one enters when one processes information.

**Practice Theory**

Practice theory, concerned with literacy in actual use, is the alternative usually articulated to skills theory. It originates in critical reaction against any overarching definitions of literacy. Practice theory realizes that literacy is not a thing, autonomous from occasions, and not unitary. There is a *multiplicity* of "literacies." Practice accounts may entirely abandon the concern with "ability" as a graded attribute of individuals, used to designate what they "need" and to manage its learning. Rejecting boundaries between more and less able, practice accounts insist on attention to however people relate to texts. However, it is not the point of practice theory to deny that individuals have abilities, but rather to make visible that abilities as they are used are constituents of actions that people take. Skills are only ever embedded in circumstances — purpose, emotion, familiarity or strangeness, hostility or cooperation, and so on.

Practice accounts ordinarily focus on "literacy events" as occasions within which people use written materials. Events are organized by "literacy practices," recurrent forms of activity through which individuals work scribally with written materials, interact with one another during or after reading and writing, and accomplish varied tasks — get an application filled out, send news to a friend, complain to a politician. Practices include ideas and judgments about the morals, ethics and politics of reading and writing, incorporated into their regulation within events. These "ideas" can include participant categorizations that assign different activities to different event participants, and can include "values" such as attitudes of deference or criticism, or orientations to collaborative or individuated interpretation.

People are seen to become literate as they "engage" with literacy practices, not developing literacy in cognitive isolation, but rather *taking in* practices in which they *take part*, practices which they witness or in which they are guided. "Engagement" also suggests that different individuals learn different aspects of literacy practices — depending on what parts they play in literacy events.

This way of thinking about literacy is immensely useful. It allows observations about the conduct of literacy as it happens — both for scholarly endeavour, and for the attention to knowing one's way around inside that conduct that is relevant for literacy work itself. It conveys

respect for people's activity, and offers an orientation to participatory pedagogy. But practice accounts have limitations. I will discuss three. (1) Although the seminal concept of "literacy event" is a conceptual breakthrough that lets literacy be seen in its non-autonomous particularity, it can also be a conceptual prison. Its situational and interactional emphasis can obscure the scribal detail that is often focal in literacy work. Viewing the event as an occasion *on which* reading or writing is done can fail to treat the reading and writing itself as something that happens. Furthermore, literacy practices don't stop with the individual or the occasion, but organize and are organized by social action across place and time. Literacy is never merely local, but is shaped in, by, and for the social relations it enters into. (2) Practice accounts are useful defensively for literacy work, drawing attention to gaps between official standardizing descriptions of literacy and realities known on the ground. But the polemical animus of practice theory against autonomous accounts can deflect analysis of autonomous concepts as themselves literacy practices — as organizing elements of action in the literacy regime — veering off instead to a merely moral critique, denouncing those theories as implicated in social inequities. (3) Although some elements of practice theory insistently start with the definite activities of actual individuals, occurring in time and space, and the organizational conditions of those activities, there is some tendency in practice theory to objectify practices, treating them, for example, as instances of an abstractly formulated "culture," or treating "practice" merely as an analytical abstraction rather than actual occurrences.

**Freire**

The theoretical juxtaposition of skills with practice leaves behind the liberatory impulse of adult literacy work in the 20th century — in particular Freire's contributions to understanding "the adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom." As is practice theory, Freire is concerned to free literacy from ideas established to dominate it, particularly ideas that consign people to memorization, and otherwise to silence. Again like practice theory, Freire recognizes literacy as people's actual activities. This appears clearly in his pedagogical and political insistence that becoming literate is inventing literacy. Famously, he argues that in teaching, teachers don't make "deposits" into students, but must dialogue with them about the world they both seek to know.

Freire's work displays the invention of literacy and ways that it can be dialogically supported. He shows that "generative words" can demonstrate how letters, as stand-ins for sounds, are combined and recombined to create new words. He further insists that generative words must reverberate powerfully in learners' lives. He says that reading is not just "walking on the words," and "authentic" reading is not limited to getting what a text says, but that word-reading is preceded by and intertwined with world-reading. Freire sees illiteracy as an expression of injustice, and literacy work as political. He shows that literacy's invention challenges silencings that injustice would impose, and requires ejecting the internalized oppressor — those self-limiting ideas that inhibit people's readings of the worlds they know and act in.

For theorizing literacy for democracy in advanced capitalist society, much of this is profoundly helpful. But there are various contextual limitations to Freire's work. Here I want to dwell on one general issue. Freire's portrayal of "literacy as cultural action for freedom" assumes that the theorist of literacy is affiliated with a political mobilization that make authentic reading possible. He writes to advise a democratic, indeed a revolutionary leadership, albeit in intellectually very sophisticated ways. It is not always evident, in Freire's writings or to his

readers, just how (much) this theorization resonates with its political context. So would-be Freirians here can have inflated hopes for "empowerment" and become frustrated, withdraw into hopeless cynicism, when it does not come; or may develop analyses of oppression that have little informative to say about literacy itself. The literacy-empowerment nexus in advanced capitalist society is neither inevitable, nor an act of will, but a local engagement with extended relations of power. Not every invention of literacy challenges injustice, and those that do don't all do so in the same way. So it can be fruitful to salt Freirian theory with practice theory's recognition of the multiplicity of literacy practices (many of which do not aim at contesting domination). But democratic theory still needs analysis of power relations that are themselves literacy-mediated, and of empowerment in the face of them. Freire importantly urges that in authentic literacy people are "subjects of" acts of reading, but in our print-saturated society people are also pervasively "objects of" (or "subject to") literacy. More than pedagogy is in question.

**Literacy-Mediated Social Relations**

Theory to inform inventions of literacy will be concerned with literacy as it happens — always as action in local events and practices, but also as engagement in relations extended beyond the local. Theory for democratic literacy work needs resources for coming to terms with the society in which literacy happens, and that it is after all the point of literacy to connect with. Literacy as ongoing creation emphatically does not stop with the individual, or with local events, but continues on to other individuals and events, connected by the material text that passes between them, through which they communicate and are coordinated.

Some of the extended relations that literacy hooks into are relations of power, in our society's dominant institutions. These produce much of the demand for literacy, both by individuals and in policy mandates. A democratic literacy theory requires some sociological method for understanding how texts and documents are implicated in the organization of contemporary societies, and for speaking to how literacy practices are parts of, or connect us to, power. Without reviewing all possible theoretical resources, I want to work here specifically with the feminist sociology of Dorothy Smith. Smith's work is a sociological investigation of how domination is exercised, under the distinctive social forms of contemporary capitalism. The dominant institutions through which governing is organized — corporations, bureaucracies, and professions — order and coordinate, define and limit, manage and administer, lives and actions in our society. They govern at a distance from what they govern, and their governing practices centrally rely on texts and documents. So this form of inquiry addresses the social organization of knowledge. It examines practices of ruling as textual practices. This examination is part of a commitment to understand the social world as produced through coordinated human activity.

Smith shows that just as language in general mediates and organizes knowledge and action, so writing, the freezing of forms of words, especially in print and digital technologies, allows the organization of knowledge and action across time and space. Writing allows forms of words to be disseminated as forms of governing, in laws, procedures, work organizations, arguments in public discourse, and so on. And practices of inscription allow particular individuals and events to be transposed into the form in which they are dealt with by institutions, in reports, applications, licenses, case histories, and so on.

The social organization of knowledge is unusual among social theories in working with a clear understanding of language and of text. It is also distinctive in its capacity to explicate the ways that particular activities are embedded in and construct social relations — extended sequences of action through which activities in diverse sites are brought into relation with one

another. Texts, as they are activated through procedures of reading and writing, are seen to operate as constituents of social relations, which they "hold" or "carry." The schema that are brought to texts (conventional reading theory's "background knowledge") are seen not as merely individual knowledge, but as operative features of institutional and discursive processes — active both in the shaping of writing and in the reading of texts for their intended meaning. Analytically, then, documents and texts are treated neither as mere "meaning" nor as simple sources of information, but as themselves moments of social organization.

This theoretical work, although it doesn't start out to be a treatment of literacy and certainly not of learning, provides useful resources for democratic literacy theory. It lets us see any literacy event as one node of an extended social organization coordinated through texts, as a "moment" of a larger process, an action in a sequence of actions. Once we see literacy as linking people across settings dispersed in space and time, we can also see literacy practices as articulated to one another, shaped for one another, across settings. We can see the interactional organization of a literacy event, at a node of an extended social organization, as one part of a larger organization of action — whose other parts are conducted in different literacy events. Thus engagement with literacy that is at one level scribal activity, is at another level an interactional engagement, and at third level an engagement in social relations. The detailed work of reading a sentence, and reading as an element of societal power relations, are the extremes of a complex multi-leveled process. At least on principle, a conception of literacy as social practices and relations in motion provides a way to encompass these extremes, seeing in readers' or writers' approach to a sentence or a text, their approach to the institutional or discursive relations which produce a text, or into which a text goes.

Conjoining Freire's recognition of the active invention of literacy with practice theory's attention to the detailed accomplishment of events of literacy, with the social organization of knowledge's resources for explicating the workings of text-mediated social relations, lets us see literacy as the active ongoing invention and production of individuals' engagement with text-mediated social relations of action and knowledge. It lets us to see the invention of literacy and its practice in local events as engagement with extended textual and documentary knowledge and action — sometimes as fitting in, sometimes as rejoinder, sometimes as renderings of experience outside the terms of governing.

**Afterword**

Space limitations prevent a detailed discussion here of relations between these theoretical observations and various specific aspects of literacy work. Instead I end with a note on relations between theory and literacy work. Literacy workers know many things about working with scribal techniques as actual practices, in motion; about the interrelations between learning and social relationships both in the classroom and in learners' lives outside the classroom; about the coherence between people's interest in literacy learning and their actual and foreseen engagements with literacy-mediated relations in work, community, religion, politics, and so on. This knowledge is not merely literacy worker know-how, but is itself substantial knowledge, has theoretical significance. But it is seldom written, and worse yet, it is routinely suppressed — in part by status differences between literacy workers and policy people or academics; in part by those conceptual practices that define any knowledge other than objectifying knowledge as "mere anecdote;" in part by increasing pressure on literacy workers to adopt the language of institutional accountabilities; and in part by the absence of theoretical forms that can begin to pull fragments of local knowledge into a mosaic of understanding of literacy as what we are

working in and working to develop. Literacy work's embodied knowledge is often caught in the telling of teaching stories, in that form of exchange of experience that follows the contours of experience as unfolding sequences of events. The work in this paper looks for concepts that are capable of holding diverse particular experiences. This isn't to give those experiences an academic home, but to hold out the possibility that theory and research can break away from objectifying practices that seek to subsume literacy under theoretical constructs, and instead provide ways of thinking that are informative resources for local practice.

**Bibliographical Note**

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# Learning to Change: A Grassroots Program Planning Model

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**Abstract**: This program planning model seeks to mitigate a gap in current planning models found in adult education literature, and to represent grassroots programming as a vital area of practice. This model incorporates the instrumental, contextual and ethical dimensions of program planning.

Contemporary program planning theory seek to provide a model by which any program planning experience can be articulated—regardless of context, practitioner or participants. Given the broad spectrum of human experience the extent to which any single model will fit all planning processes—regardless of context, actors and objectives--is dubious. Embedded in current models are assumptions about the planner, the learners, and what constitutes a "genuine" program.

Most program planning models offer valuable information by which current practitioners may reflect on their own practices, and by which novice planners may avoid hours of unnecessary guesswork. Nonetheless, current program planning models do not reflect the full range of programmers' work. In particular, the efforts of planners whose communities are marginalized and excluded—communities of colour, women, gay men & lesbians, ethnic and religious minorities and the disabled—follow practices that are do not fit neatly into the codification of these models. As such, their work is not adequately represented in the literature.

In this paper I offer a *grassroots program planning model*, one which embraces the work of activists as a unique mode of adult education program planning.

## Review of the Literature

Most of the canon of planning literature in adult education has it origins traceable to Ralph W. Tyler's generalist *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1969). Both Houle (1996) and Knowles (1980) narrow their focus to the practice of adult education, but each model represent a more nuanced articulation of Tyler's work. Caffarella's (1994) and Sork's (1997) models take the instrumental aspects of planning emphasized in Tyler's, Houle's and Knowles' work, and bring consideration of the planning context and the ethics embedded in the planning process directly into their models. Cervero and Wilson's critical perspective of program planning (1994; 1996) offers an unique approach in that it eschews the instrumental nature of the planning process— "what to do and how to do it" --instead focussing on the dynamics of power and interests in the planning experience. Though the questions they examine are important, for novice planners their decision to exclude technical issues renders their work vague and abstract. The extent to which their work constitutes a veritable planning model is questionable.

Freire's popular education (1986) represents a learner-centered model for adult basic education programs delivered at the grassroots level. However, its design relies upon "experts" with training in traditional social science disciplines to determine program content and instructional strategies, making the practice of popular education truly a specific application of traditional, rational planning. The objectification of learners via the process of *conscientization* (p. 90) is as doctrinaire as those presented in the other models, which fall within a more liberal

notion of adult education. Any difference is more in terms of ideology than practice; all these models (including Freire's) reifies a more knowledgeable planner over the learner.

What all these models have in common—and what limits their value to many activists engaging in grassroots community education—is their presumption of program planning as an activity which occurs or originates exclusively in formalized institutions or organizations. Granted, in community settings worthwhile, even vital endeavours are initiated in community centres, neighbourhood houses, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). But many others emerge from the community itself, without institutional participation.

Across Canada and throughout the world citizens are engaged in programs designed and delivered locally. In various contexts, peers discuss their lives, aspirations, and challenges amongst one another; such discussions lead to more formal meetings, which themselves lead to plans of action. Almost always, whether the issues engaged are about schooling, the environment, civil rights, or staying healthy, people are learning from one another about how to improve their lives and about what (or who) impedes progress towards their goals. These nascent "small-p" projects—frequently local in scope but often large in their impact—are under-represented in the current body of program planning literature because their ad hoc, extra-institutional nature. The following *grassroots* model of program planning serves to mitigate this.

## A Model Rooted In Experience

My own lived experiences exemplify the practices to which this model refers. My program planning experience began nearly 20 years ago, but this work's almost always extra-institutional nature led me to discount its significance. Though I believed education to be a critical component of my activism towards social justice (among gay men and lesbians, substance abusers and mental health consumers), I never viewed myself as an educator, nor as a planner of adult education programs. But that is precisely what much of my work entailed: sorting out what could (and should) be done to improve marginalized peoples' material experiences. Strategizing on how best to accomplish this occurred away from mainstream society's institutions, which were often the perceived sources of the inequities against which we fought. In operating "on the outside", my colleagues and I sacrificed funding possibilities, in order to create programs that were unencumbered by donor constraint. Our work relied on (unpaid) peer educators, and used emerging local knowledges (Foucault, p. 62).

## A Grassroots Model

This model is based on an *a posteriori* understanding of what grassroots program planners do. It puts equal value on the instrumental, contextual and ethical dimensions of grassroots program planning. This model has six components: coalescence, strategizing, internal change, external change, evaluation and continuation/cessation. While from project to project each component may not be applicable (particularly internal and external change), each aspect delineates particular stages in the lifecycle of a grassroots program.

> *Coalescence*: Coalescence often occurs "in the neighbourhood" or at venues within the community, including places of worship, schools, and community centres. In a shared context peers begin to discuss mutual interests or concerns—something needs to be changed, or something is missing. Such initially informal chats during normal social interactions inspire some members of the community to propose more formalized discussion

*Strategizing*: Now gathered for the explicit purpose of formulating a plan of action, community members meet and consider their options. Whereas other planning models usually discuss this stage as needs assessment, in grassroots program planning the luxury of any formal process of need determination often is not tenable. Persons who are marginalized or excluded from the mainstream of society are usually too occupied with the day-to-day challenges of survival to be able to dedicate much time and energy needed for such structured activity. Instead, brainstorming possible actions to take are discussed, and goals identified. These goals fall into two categories: internal or external change.

*Internal change*: Actions to be taken wholly within the local context, and which do not require any sort of institutional involvement. Parents organizing study groups for their neighbourhood's children, or setting up a volunteer committee to keep a street trash-free are two examples of programs geared towards internal change. Retention of local control in decision-making and implementation is much easier to maintain with programs like these, where little contact with outside bureaucracies is needed. Local objectives are prioritized, and can be rapidly implemented.

*External change*: Communities often need to pursue outside assistance for their issues. Permits may be required to host events, or funding for projects might need to be solicited. Some issues—such as those related to health and wellness—inevitable require the pursuit of services from government agencies. Seeking outside assistance usually necessitates bringing external stakeholders into the planning process; a more complex negotiation of interests can result in local priorities losing weight. With migration towards external change often come the normative practices of institutionally-based program planning.

*Evaluation*: In grassroots settings, formal evaluation methods are usually eschewed for more consensus-based measures: do we see things changing as we had hoped? What seems to work best? What could we do differently? Perhaps the most common strategy is the use of informal conversation between the planners and the participants. Conversation is less likely to inculcate any hierarchical power dynamics, and adapts well to participants' time constraints.

*Continuation or Cessation*: Grassroots programs continue as long as they are perceived to be of value to the community they serve. They commonly operate on a limited basis, in response to a specific set of circumstances and stop when they are no longer seen as necessary, or when there is insufficient community support to sustain them. However, it is not unusual for established grassroots programs to eventually migrate to more formalized structures (like community centres and NGOs), where they are adapted to more standardized program planning paradigms.

**Discussion**

Why aren't grassroots programs more prominently featured in program planning literature? Few of us would view this omission as a calculated, purposeful one. Certainly there is an under-representation of local knowledges in academe in general. But adult education's canon claims a specific role in the mitigation of injustice; as such, the dearth of grassroots work in our

literature is in some ways more troubling. But there are logistical and political reasons for this lack of representations.

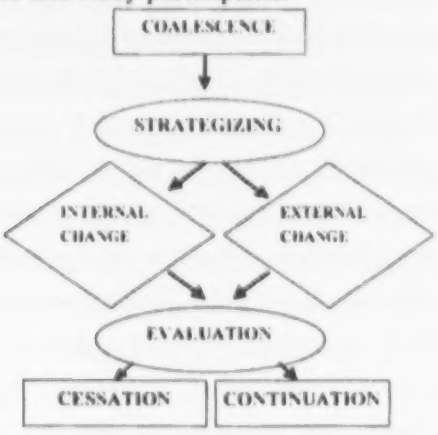
Grassroots programs are usually "under the radar" of mainstream society and its institutions, including the university. While the location of these programs outside our purviews makes sense given the limited degree to which marginalized and excludes peoples' realities appear in *any* disciplines literature, this positioning of these activities isn't wholly circumstantial. Among activists the ability to program creatively, effectively and inexpensively—and, outside the institutions that exclude them—carries with it a certain hubris. Activists take certain pride in doing their work without the resources available in formal settings. By keeping their work out of the mainstream's purview, grassroots planners keep their work "pure", vis á vis uncorrupted.

As disinclined university-based adult education researcher may be to look for grassroots programming activity, so too are activists disinclined to draw attention to their work outside their own milieus. This reticence is quite pragmatic. In the contexts in which grassroots programs are planned and delivered, there are usually context-specific measures of program efficacy and value. If it good enough for the community, it is good enough.

**A Need for Research**

We know that grassroots programs provide vitally important services to under-served communities. But we are lacking data to explicate the nature of these programs, their lifecycles, and their place in adult education as a broader practice. Just as grassroots planners are perhaps wary of bringing their projects forward for scrutiny by academics, as researchers we should be scrutinous in how innovative methodological approaches could mitigate such concerns.

Grassroots activism is rooted in the principle of *action*; grassroots programs are oriented towards creating substantive change as quickly and straightforwardly as possible. This pragmatism makes many activists dubious of the value (and veracity) of lengthy ethnographic or quantitative inquiries. A research process that treats them as objects would be objectionable. More participatory methods, such as action research or participatory research, might better serve the interests of both researchers and study participants.



## Notes

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# Global Adult Education, Justice and Spirituality

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**Abstract:** This paper reports on life history research with 13 female adult educators who work in international development contexts. The research examines the intersection of justice and spirituality in their lives. Two areas are explored: (a) the background factors and experiences that influenced these adult educators to undertake their justice work, and (b) how these international adult educators make spiritual sense of their lives. Several themes are identified and discussed: conflict with organized religion, spirituality.lived in the everyday, significant relationships, spirituality as contributing to the common good, and connections of work to meaning-making and spirituality.

## Introduction

This paper reports on a study of the intersection of justice, education and spirituality in the lives of adult educators who work with global civil society organizations (Hall, 1993). The primary goal of the research was to inquire critically into the life histories of 13 female adult educators whose lives exemplify a commitment to justice and spirituality. The research is situated at the intersection of the personal/spiritual and the public lives of those adult educators who are concerned with justice in the global sphere. This life history research, which assumed a joint production between the narrator and the researcher, had several objectives: (a) to develop understanding of the values, knowledge, experiences of international adult educators; (b) to develop the limited knowledge base of the intersection of spirituality, global justice, and adult education in the lives of international adult educators; and (c) to contribute this knowledge to the field of adult education as a way to reclaim a focus on the common good. The data analysis provides adult education practitioners and researchers with insight into how they might develop a global justice orientation for their field. This is an orientation that is often tied to spirituality and one that is intricately tied to the early vision of the field of adult education. The data analysis can assist adult educators in their quest to reclaim their field's roots in global justice, education, and spirituality.

## Theoretical Framework

Early adult educators embodied and promoted a vision of education for social justice (Coady, 1939), a broad international mandate (Kidd, 1973), and a commitment to the common good (Lindeman, 1926). For many of them, spirituality was the inspiration and guiding force in their work (Yeaxlee, 1925). Although the current creeping professionalism and a techno-rationalist vision in adult education have caused angst in the field (e.g., Welton, 1995), examples of how to reclaim a justice vision for adult education are elusive. Even though the issue of spirituality has recently been explored by researchers in adult education and related areas (e.g., Heron, 1996; Hunt, 1998; Fenwick & Lange, 1998; Reason, 1993), the relationship of spirituality to adult education and justice has not been well explored, with few exceptions (e.g., Tisdell, 2000). Yet, adult education leaders in the 20th century (e.g., Freire, 1970) evidenced strong spiritual motivations for their work. To know more about and understand these webs of relationship, we need to talk to international adult educators who frequently exhibit the ability to

integrate spiritual and justice dimensions into their lives and work. For the purposes of this study, spirituality is theorized to include: a strong sense of who one is; care, concern and outreach to the other; and the continuous construction of meaning and knowledge (English, 2000). This is a "secular," not necessarily religious (Van Ness, 1996), and "public," or action oriented" (Berry, 1988) spirituality, which is lived out in the everyday world of human experience and is oriented to global justice.

Although many adult educators have begun writing about spirituality and justice and their relationship to the field (e.g., Apps, 1996; English, Fenwick, & Parsons, in press; Hunt, 1998; Weibust & Thomas, 1994; Westrup, 1998), little empirical research has been done. An exception is Tisdell's (2000) research, which was primarily with women in higher education who grew up in religious traditions. The intersections of spirituality, justice, and adult education need to be explored further, on a more global scale, with men and women, and with an openness to more secular (not necessarily religious) types of spirituality. This study provided an opportunity to see how one group of adult educators has managed to integrate spirituality and justice into their educational work. This study provided an opportunity to operationalize the broad, inclusive definition of spirituality given above to determine how it intersects with the experience of those who educate internationally for justice.

## Research Design

The research was qualitative in nature and employed a life history approach (Goodson, 1992; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). The life history method was well-suited to this study by making it possible to explore the highly personal and uniquely contextualized nature of each international adult educator's spirituality and justice orientation, and its relationship to their commitments to the common good. In-depth interviews were carried out with 13 female adult educators who have worked globally (9 were from North America and 4 were from Asia and Africa). The criteria for selection were that the women had worked internationally and that they were willing to talk about the intersection of spirituality and justice in their work. These women were available through their association (not necessarily employment) with the Coady International Institute in Nova Scotia.

The 90-minute interviews were used to surface accounts of the background factors that influenced their choice of international adult education work, the nature and extent of their international experiences, and the motivations and supports for their practice. This approach allowed the researcher to gather data on how the narrators define spirituality and justice, and how these elements intersect with their educational practice. The life history approach was used to prepare individual accounts of each person's experiences and learning processes as an international adult educator. Then thematic analysis across the cases, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), was used to compare participants' experiences in different social-political contexts. These interviews allowed collective critical reflection on experience and facilitated the uncovering of insights and perspectives into their experience and knowledge construction (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995).

## Themes in the Research

To highlight the particularities of this research I present the major themes that arose from the interviews. My interview interest was in the adult educators' commitment to social issues, the background factors and experiences that influenced and supported that commitment, and the relationship (if any) of spirituality to their work.

*Conflict With Organized Religion*

All 13 of the women interviewed identified themselves as having been raised in a religious tradition. However, only the 3 women from the South spoke of religion as an *integral* part of their current lives, though several of the women still attended church services. Three of the white Canadians, in particular, spoke of the difficulty of being committed to justice and at the same time being part of a church that gave lip-service but little tangible support to social action. As they became more involved with international work, they became increasingly uncomfortable with their church's inattention to social justice concerns. Mary, a white Canadian who lives for part of the year in Central America doing research and accompanying refugees home from Canada, spoke of the difficulty in finding like-minded people in her church. For many years, she was an activist and was "having trouble relating it to her faith." Because she is not "interested in activism for activism's sake," but rather in it as an outgrowth from her religious beliefs, she has had to work hard to find people who share her values and concerns. Many of these people are not connected to churches.

*Living Spirituality in the Everyday*

The women's description of their own spirituality consisted of an overall mix of elements including organized religion, personal development interests, and nature mysticism. Common among these women was a profound sense of the Transcendent (named variously as "God," "a higher power," and a "creator") working in their lives. Nancy, a white Canadian, now working with adults with disabilities, described her international work in the Caribbean as the point when she really became overwhelmed by the "beauty of God in creation." She noted that she had never seen such abundance in nature and that "she would sit in the woods and go 'ooh'." This awareness of something greater than herself sustained her international work and continues to sustain her social service work since returning to Canada 10 years ago.

For other women in the study, defining spirituality consisted of a negation of organized religion because it had not been supportive of their quest for meaning. Although all 12 were raised within a religious tradition (mainly Christianity), their current involvement was nil or marginal. One participant, Selma, a black community development worker and national of Ghana, identified herself as a practising Muslim who followed only those elements of her religion that made sense to her: a focus on community development work and a commitment to justice. Other than these, she ignored the traditional taboos around women, and the aspects of her religion that limited her. Selma saw her community development work as an opportunity to live her beliefs. She felt it important to embrace only those dimensions of religion that affirmed her as a woman, that helped her live her life with integrity, and that nurtured her family and community relationships, all of which were essential to her spirituality.

Many of the women identified daily rituals or disciplines that sustained them. Reena, a community-based adult educator and organizer in India, discussed the importance of meditation and Bible reading in her life. Although she does not rigidly adhere to the practice of rituals, she says they help her nurture her spirituality and inform her work in justice for women. Jane, a white Canadian, who now teaches international students and who has spent many years volunteering overseas, discussed her need to walk on the beach and to commune with nature as important in challenging times. Shelly, who was born into an affluent, white Canadian household, has abandoned mainstream Roman Catholicism and now practises a mixture of Rastafarianism, Catholicism, and Buddhism. She writes in her journal and practises mediation

every day; as a result, she has become stronger and describes herself now as very "happy." Despite parental pressure to return home to Canada she has held firm to her commitment to literacy education work with West Indian women and plans to "stay there, be happy, and practise the art of being."

*Significant Relationships*

In each case, mentors were enormous influences on the women's life work. Jane, a white Canadian who now teaches international development workers who come to Canada for instruction, spoke of her parents' lifelong involvement in community and international development. Her father had done field work in Asia and Africa with an international development agency overseas, and her mother had been very active in local community development initiatives. Consequently, Jane grew up believing that she wanted to contribute to the "common good" (Daloz et al. 1996) in some way. She became active in a variety of development, international, and justice organizations and committed herself to a lifetime of international adult education, serving for 10 years in Africa as a nurse, and now as a teacher of international students and consultant for international agencies. The Roman Catholic nuns she saw every day of her youth were a significant influence on Jane's life choices. These nuns had worked internationally and, to her, their lives seemed dedicated to doing "the right thing." As a little girl, Jane thought she wanted to do the kind of work that the nuns and her parents did.

In addition to formative influences, in many cases the women had large networks of peers who supported them in their work. Reena, a community development worker, for example, was born and raised in India and has become part of a team working to support women's development. The team consists of legal, medical, and community development experts. Reena has a master's degree in sociology and identifies herself as a professional social worker. Away from home for a 6-month sabbatical in Canada, she admitted she missed the team. Reena believes that her "spirituality is lived out in her relationship with people and [her] genuine conviction that they collectively can be part of the solution to India's challenges." She believes teams are essential for the growth of the members and of herself.

*Spirituality as Contributing to the Common Good*

The women I interviewed embody a spirituality that is characterized by a thirst for justice, for equitable economic and social order. The interviews yielded rich detail about how the adult educators saw their work contributing to the common good. Shelly, a white Canadian, for instance, saw her international women's literacy work as an opportunity to "give something back for all that she has been given" as her spiritual purpose. She also notes that she values the opportunities to be with other committed ex-patriots who hold similar values. She stresses that she needs to work on herself, her inner person, in order to be useful to others. Living and working for justice among women in the Global South gave her the opportunity to make spiritual sense of an affluent suburban upbringing and her life choices that cause conflict with her parents. Shelly took a long time to come to the realization that affluence is not something to feel bad about—it is part of giving to others.

Kate, a white community development worker, described her experience of growing up in the politically-charged United Kingdom in the sixties and seventies, with former colonies gaining independence. She felt that international work provided an opportunity to give something back. All of the women interviewed wanted to be part of passing on what they had received.

*Connections of Work to Meaning-Making and Spirituality*

The women in this study not only talk about how they help others—in every case they report the richness they receive as a result of their involvement with international adult education. For many of the women, spirituality is connected to justice and a concern for right order in political, economic, and social spheres. Reena, a native of India, discussed her work of providing training for women in areas such as political literacy, which she has been doing for 9 years. She described the moment she knew she had chosen the "right work for me." One morning she awoke to hear that following the gang rape of a local woman, some 200 women organized themselves and protested, without the help of the NGO that had been training them. When Reena heard this story she knew then that her 9 years of educational work in the region were worthwhile. A commitment to working for justice helped her make sense of poverty and inequity in her country.

In order to derive meaning from their work, these women not only needed to see it as activity, but activity that had a purpose and meaning. The women were involved because the ability to work collaboratively to educate others gave their lives purpose and meaning. More importantly, the work connected them to a larger project, justice for all. This collective sense and the notion that they were contributing to the larger whole was a strong motivator and part of their integrated spirituality.

## Summary

The stories that the women told seemingly came easily to them. Adult educators can learn from the fact that these women welcomed the opportunity to discuss their spirituality. In each case, the women told freely of their experiences, often citing spirituality as the core of their being, their *raison d'être*, and as the aspect of themselves that they spend the most time fostering. Far from shying away from spirituality, or keeping a hands-off approach, these female adult educators seemed only too glad to discuss spirituality. The issues and ideas generated by a discussion of spirituality are integral to their wholeness as persons.

The need to address spirituality and provide opportunities to discuss it with other adult educators is very important. Jane pointed out that going overseas is very difficult, and it can "bring up a lot of things in one's life." Because the differences in culture and class in the new country are often considerable, having an opportunity to talk about the "journey" makes sense. The intensity of international experiences is known to those who have been overseas. As Jane also noted, dealing openly with spirituality can "help you when you are there." The fact that spirituality is not factored into and is not an integral component of international adult education training or on-site education is problematic. Given the intensity of overseas work, this situation is different from adult education in a familiar context and requires more careful attention and responsiveness to the needs of adult educators. The distinction between religion and spirituality makes it possible for adult educators to focus on spirituality, and avoid the controversy and negativity that some of these women articulated about religious traditions.

Further interviews are required to explore some of the issues that did arise such as the differences between the Canadian born and those born in the Global South, as well as racial and class differences. None of the women discussed how their race affected their work or their interactions with others. All 12 women were middle-class, though only one identified class as a motivating factor in her choice of international development work. Further research is necessary

to explicate the differences and how they affected work and the spirituality for women working in an international adult education context.

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# Dimensions of Spirituality: A Framework for Adult Educators

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**Abstract**: This paper claims that although spirituality is increasingly featured in adult education literature, much is either descriptive or enthusiastically prescriptive. A rather wild eclecticism currently prevails. As educators we lack robust theoretical tools to help illuminate wide variation among spiritual orientations, each with different fundamental beliefs and values. The paper presents a framework comprising eight dimensions of spirituality, as a first step to illuminating important distinctions and incommensurable elements.

## Introduction

Spirituality is gaining prominence as an integral part of adult education practice and adult development theory. Clark and Caffarella (1999) recently have named spirituality as a distinct dimension in their four-part classification of adult development theory (biological, psychological, sociocultural, and integrative). MacKeracher (1996) also addresses spirituality explicitly in her text about adult learning, and even provides instruction for facilitators in things spiritual. Dirkx (2000) writes about the soul, urging adult educators to recognize and honor the spiritual in learning. Tisdell (1999) observes that spirituality is "all encompassing and cannot be torn from other aspects of adult development" (p. 94), and argues that the spiritual domain is linked with adult educators' call and commitment to vocation. In an edited book devoted to the topic, English and Gillen (1999) explore a wide range of practices and understandings integrating spirituality in adult education. Fenwick and Lange (1998) also illustrate the growing numbers of North American training and adult education programs developing spirituality, and pose critical questions about the agendas and ethics of integrating adult education with spirituality in particular contexts.

These are examples of a growing body of literature that still remains largely at the descriptive stage. Beyond some research (i.e. English, 1998; Tisdell, 2000; West, 1999) exploring adults' spiritual experiences as these are integrated with their learning, little theory in the adult education field exists to critically examine forms and ranges of spirituality. While theorizing about spirituality is common in theological fields, the exploration there is generally framed within particular doctrinal beliefs and texts. Some writing has emerged in curriculum fields (i.e. Palmer, 1998; Miller, 2000; Slattery, 1995) that begins to theorize connections between education and spirituality, but this remains situated at the K-12 level and is largely uncritical.

If spirituality continues to attract the significant popular and pedagogical interest that is evident to date, robust analytical frames would be helpful to sort through what Taylor (1996) has termed the "wild explosion" of spiritual literature and expressions that are proliferating. Many "spiritual" writers now seem to draw freely from astrology, New Age consumables, Western and Eastern religious doctrines and theology, recovery movement "healing" literature, and even personal ecstatic experience. Such eclecticism may be democratic, but the result can be a confusing and misleading mash of spiritual traditions. Educators need to move beyond shallow

notions and romantic rhetoric to more rigorous conceptions of what spirituality means, and how different conceptions and responses might be enacted in adult learning and education.

This paper presents eight dimensions of spirituality, as a beginning step to building a theoretical framework for comparing and analysing the "wild" explosion of spiritualities attending late modernity. These eight themes have been selected from a review of spiritual literature. Within each, spiritual beliefs and practices are differently situated. We suggest three questions to guide educators' reading of these dimensions: Where are my beliefs about my pedagogical and spiritual practices located? (and who or what is included/excluded from that position?) What is my purpose or desire? (and what motivates it?) And finally, What drives my interest in integrating the spiritual with the pedagogical?

*1. Life and Death (The Meaning of Life on Earth or Beyond)*

Some spiritual traditions are "life-centered", focusing on meeting worldly needs, enhancing, and empowering life. Others focus on the transcendent, renouncing everyday life to seek "life beyond". Taylor (1996) shows that spiritual belief systems range on a continuum between these two fundamental orientations. Spiritual goodness was sometimes located in production, hard work, and the family: emblems of a particular material form of life-centredness. At other times goodness has been connected to a life-centredness that spreads justice, benevolence, and equality, relieving suffering and fostering prosperity. This stance echoes Coady's integration of spiritual development with economic pragmatism. The transcendent stance, most evident in the monastic tradition that is currently enjoying a popular revival, has often been rejected for abandoning the human world of life and suffering to indulge a lofty and esoteric path.

For some faith traditions, suffering (including doubt, darkness, misfortune, evil) is an essential part of life -- to be accepted, dwelt in, learned from and possibly saved from, but not necessarily 'fixed' in our modernist sense of problem-solving. Self-sacrifice has been represented as a gift leading to grace (Christianity), a discipline to tame desire (Buddhism), and a necessary door to losing the self and attaining enlightenment. In other spiritualities, suffering and sacrifice are treated as obstacles to enhanced, flourishing life, from which spiritual practices can help deliver us. However when any of these struggles are unnamed in a spirituality, the spiritual sojourner is left bereft. Sunny idealism and feel-good beliefs go only so far in explaining life's complexity.

Death, in some life-centred spiritualities, is either absent from consideration or is resisted. Conversely certain ecological life-centred spiritualities view death and destruction as a natural part of the lifeworld, and critical to transformation. The concept of kenosis in Buddhism, for example, is an 'emptying out' of self, putting to death something within the self, in order to renounce the 'grasping' parts of the ego. Or in ecological terms, consider the life of a forest. Balance of life, consumption, and death are priorities; the will to preserve life of one being above all can be viewed as an attempt to assert human control over broader ecological cycles upon which life depends.

*2. Soul and Self (The Nature of Spirit)*

All spiritual traditions declare some fundamental understanding of soul, and as Wilber (1997) explains, soul and self are closely connected in most writings. Some believe the self is fixed, autonomous, and coherent (i.e. Hillman, 1996). Others argue that humans have multiple, shifting selves which emerge in different situations and stories (Clark and Dirkx, 2000). Wilber

describes spirit as evolving through our various selves so that, through us, spirit sees itself, knows itself. The highest human state is that of divine witness.

Some spiritualities celebrate and glorify self, seeking to understand and pamper one's 'authentic' self. However in other spiritual pursuits, surrender of self is a key dimension. In the Judeo-Christian traditions, followers are called to surrender the will, to give away one's life, to find it in God and/or the communal. Emphasis is on servanthood and discipleship. In Buddhist meditation, one learns to surrender one's desires and ego-self, as well as the search for absolute meaning itself (Buddhaghosa, 1976). Oliver (1992) argues, working with the varied philosophies of Buber, Eckhart, Nishida Kitaro and orthodox Christianity, that spiritual reality is understanding and dwelling in the 'true' self, which is a 'no-self': it dissolves in the act of experiencing the world. To know the true self, the no self, the relational self, is to be one with the divine.

*3. Cosmology (The Nature of the Spiritual Universe, Including Higher Powers)*

Most spiritual traditions construct an understanding of the origins and structure of the cosmos, and share an interest in the nature of the sacred, time, how energy and power flow through the spiritual universe, and the existence of 'higher power' or the 'divine'. Within this cosmos are defined the nature of self and its relation to the divine, the relation of the present to eternity, the relation of the human world to the natural and supernatural, the grounds of moral reasoning and prescriptions for behavior. The nature of the sacred is at issue in all spiritualities: How is it infused into daily life, glimpsed, and recovered? Spiritual time is a second important issue of the cosmos. What is eternity? What is tradition, and history? What is 'the present moment'? Which is most pre-occupying? Should we orient ourselves more to the present, or to the future? As Taylor (1996) argues, spiritualities distinguish themselves according to how they respond to this question.

A third cosmological issue is the source and circulation of energy. The presence of a higher power for some is monotheistic (one God), for others polytheistic (many gods), and for still others pantheistic (god in all things). Some do not believe in a theistic authority at all, viewing energy as human empowerment, or as circulating in natural, ecological systems.

A fourth issue is the nature of individuals' relationship with the energy of the cosmos. Some spiritualities approach this relationship as the ultimate goal, others as the starting point supporting pursuit of personal goals (ranging from fulfillment of worldly desires to attaining other-worldly enlightenment). Jones (1989) distinguishes between those who understand this relationship as an inner experience (apophatic), or as an outer experience (kataphatic). Creation theology (whose proponents include Thomas Berry and Matthew Fox, among others) emphasizes intimacy between human and natural world, understanding all as a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects.

*4. Knowledge (The Nature of Truth)*

Different spiritualities can be distinguished according to what counts as knowledge, distinguished along three dimensions: (a) the possibility of absolute truth or multiple truths; (b) the presence of divine authorit(ies); and (c) the role of human intellect in seeking spiritual knowledge/s. Some spiritualities rest on a doctrine of absolute truth with varying degrees of fundamentalism (intolerance for contradicting beliefs). Others understand multiple truths, with varying degrees of genuine acceptance of different beliefs and even fluid boundaries or the possibility of evolution among beliefs. Epistemic authority may be granted to a higher power

(addressed above). Human rationality is variously treated as an obstacle (the monkey mind of Buddhism) or a pathway to divine inspiration (Judaism and Islam). Wilber (1997) describes a human rationality as enabling spiritual 'perspectivism', an integration of various points of view to better detect the contours of human experience.

A second issue is the process of spiritual knowing. Knowledge is variously revealed through divine or supernatural revelation and prophetic message. In different spiritual communities, personal mystical knowings are questioned and regulated through dialogue, discipline, doctrine, and study. The role of humans seeking truth ranges from those spiritual paradigms dedicated to wisdom and enlightenment, to those who encourage faith in and acceptance of mystery. Knowledge is variously represented as the 'key' to spiritual growth, or a dangerous door to a loss of innocence. Some spiritualities insist on long study, others on intuition and simplicity. Some do not focus on knowledge at all, emphasizing emotional release and communion above thought. Within spiritualities, tradition sometimes collides with today's tempo as new converts want quick answers. Jewish scholars, describing the problem with the newly popularized Kabballah faith, refer to a traditional light/fire phenomenon in spirituality: the truth we long for can't be controlled, hurried, or 'applied', and it often bites (Wiltz, 1997).

*5. The "Way" (The Nature of the Spiritual Journey or Search)*

The 'way' theme speaks to appreciating learners' life struggles, and educators' role in them. The nature of this journey varies among spiritualities according to several dimensions, some of which have been alluded to in previous sections. First is the time required: a lifetime, a quick healing, or time beyond life -- perhaps reaching through several human lives or into a heavenly afterlife. Second is the extent of personal freedom to control and make choices along this journey, in contrast to faith or surrender to other energies and dynamics. Related is a third point: where is spirituality in one's life? Is the spiritual journey represented as simply one dimension of life, co-existing with but supporting intellectual life, marital life, career and creativity? Or are other parts of life subordinate to the spiritual life? This dimension is closely connected to the continuum described in section 1, between an essential focus on life-centredness or on transcendence.

Fourth, is the spiritual journey represented more as a solitary sojourn or a connective, communal one? Is it more meditative or action-oriented in nature? Fifth, what is the emotional content of the journey? How are peak experiences understood, and what role do they play? Conversely, what is the role of negativity, questioning, and doubting on the journey in contrast to an emphasis on the positive: joy, healing, peace, and happiness? Or is the journey a more cerebral and intellectual truth-seeking, understanding certain emotions as distractive ego-grasping?

Sixth and most important, how is the outcome of a spiritual journey portrayed? James Fowler (1975) and others represent this journey as progressive growth, in a western 'development/improvement' paradigm. In strong contrast, other spiritualities seek to accept and dwell in mystery, and oppose the appropriation of the spiritual journey as a self-help technology (Moore, 1996).

*6. Focus (The Purposes of Spiritual Seeking)*

Some popular spiritual writers such as Breathnach (1995) and Cameron (1993) promote an inner journey of healing, personal peace, and exalting the self. Others (i.e. Mack, 1992) focus on an outward journey expressed in action such as servanthood, integrating spiritual perspectives

with gritty everyday reality. Principe (1997) explains spirituality as a dual movement, simultaneously inward and outward, that connects the world with individual souls.

This dialogue highlights the importance of purpose, as a distinguishing dimension of spiritualities. Different individuals pursue a spiritual journey for motives ranging from those more self-focused (such as seeking redemption, repentance, rebirth) and self-serving (becoming more creative, happy, healthy) to more other-focused (caring and connecting to help others and create community). Purposes range from more worldly to other-worldly, and from more inquiry-oriented to more action-oriented such as the liberation theologies of social justice described in the next section. Holmes (1980) differentiates spiritualities according to four purposes (i.e. societal regeneration, inner life, personal renewal, or theological renewal).

Purpose and motive in spiritual pursuit is continually troubled by the problem of desire. Why are we drawn to this or that spirituality, this or that vocation, this or that drive to possess? Some spiritualities represent this problem as discerning our 'true' desire, putting to death the misleading destructive desires of our grasping life to awaken to 'true' life. Macpherson (1996) describes Tantric Buddhism, for example, as an education of desire, transcending dualisms of right and wrong and a cult of consumption and production to find a path of moderation. For others, desire for greater wisdom, wealth, and success is celebrated as the fuel and reward of spiritual endeavor. Then there are those apparently untroubled by motive, for whom spirituality is a trend to be marketed and spiritual need a weakness to be turned to competitive advantage.

*7. Practices of Spirituality and the Role of Others*

Slattery (1995) writes that the spiritual approaches union with the mystery of eternity through various practices: meditational practice, ecclesial and daily ritual, divine revelation, theological discipline, service to others, participation in community, human relationships, work, and learning. Spiritual practices of many organized religions such as Islam and Judaism are regulated through disciplines of routine, rules, and even sacrifice. Others focus more on reverence through relationships and disciplines of responsibility and service. 'Mindfulness' is a discipline of both Buddhist and Celtic spiritualities, invoking wide-awake attention to and engagement with all parts of one's being to each full moment of everyday life. Discipline stands in contrast to spiritualities that eschew regulation of any kind, or practices other than spontaneous ad-hoc expression.

A growing tension among spiritualities that Dreyer (2000) identifies is that between community-centered practices and individualistic practices. Communality has historically provided spiritual support and strength through doctrine, ritual, shared experience, and voice. Meanwhile, the cult of self flourishes in much popular expression of spirituality.

*8. Responses (Action and Application Arising From Spiritual Pursuits)*

Human response is linked to purpose of the spiritual pursuit, and may be more life-centered (i.e. expanding creative potential, healing spiritual pain, or activating social justice) or transcendent (prayer, retreats, grace). Adult educators are often compelled by desires to serve, but what constitutes service varies from Fox's (1993) notions of compassion to Freire's (1970) of transformation.

Service responses in some spiritualities are broad-based, spreading far afield for social transformation (as in liberation theologies) or conversion of others (as in evangelistic traditions). Other spiritualities concentrate on accepting what is and liberating oneself within it close to home, as in the Benedictine way to find focus and humility in community, seeking joy where one

is at present. Service may be enacted in building or transforming communities, cultivating sacred environments towards a 'spirit-filled' world, or simply attending deeply and with compassion to another person. Service may be focused on justice, as in Ghandi's "loving people into transformation", or Myles Horton's celebration of common human experience to liberate human empowerment in civil rights struggles.

Liberation theology and emancipatory pedagogy share a long tradition of uniting the spiritual search with critical thinking and social action. In the past decade more curriculum theorists such as Slattery (1995) and theologians such as Griffin (1988) are articulating a common vision linking spirituality with education as a process of personal and civic transformation. Slattery (1995) contends that religion and education are inseparable, and he outlines a constructive postmodern vision which threads "ethical and ecumenical integration of spirituality and theology into the very fabric of education" (p. 68).

**Implications for Development of Adult Education Theory and Practice**

'Spirituality' in educational literature is too often essentialized as some sort of monolithic force blending deep cultural, political and epistemological divides. In theological and philosophical literature, however, multiple delineations are described showing the folly of conceptualizing the spiritual in such simplistic and unitary terms. In this paper we have presented eight dimensions of spiritualities, and we have outlined varying spiritual pursuits and tensions within these eight. These dimensions of life and death, soul and self, cosmology, knowledge, the "Way", focus, practices and others' role, and right responses are all interrelated. Most spiritual practices embed, whether explicit or tacit, some sort of position within these eight dimensions representing a particular way of seeing, believing, and acting in the world. Irreconciliable differences about epistemic authority, moral purposes, understandings of soul, self, and relation to the cosmos, etc. have historically generated horrific conflicts among spiritualities. Indeed in many scholarly circles, demonizing of organized religion, particularly Christianity and denominations labelled 'the religious right', is tacitly accepted. Amidst these politics, how do educators construct a pedagogical philosophy entwining spirituality while upholding justice, caring, criticality, and equity?

We maintain that educators who link their practice to spirituality need to examine these dimensions carefully. We need to discern the motives and centres of different spiritualities, as well as our own motives and the source of our attraction to them. This is one aspect most neglected by some educational writings on spirituality, moral leadership and community building. Are we simply seeking a short-lived feel-good self-affirmation? Are we seeking to escape uncertainty and rapid change through simple answers? Are we hiding from life's pain in a rosy glow of panaceas -- and ignoring darker purposes moving underneath the spiritual promises? For educators who have already decided to promote spirituality in their practice, the pluralism of spiritual expression presents an interesting further choice. Does the educator ask, How do I create an inclusive practice which welcomes and appreciates all spiritual expression? Or does the educator ask, How do I form a defensible position of moral adjudication from which I will presume to distinguish between the rich and the impoverished, the nourishing and the destructive, in spiritual pursuits that become entwined with my practice? This old debate around relativism cannot ethically be avoided with some sort of squashy practice of pick-and-mix. Spirituality is neither simple emotivism, nor an idealized caring community where the prevailing belief is whatever sliding vision the members of the moment create for themselves.

Through examination of the interplay of light and darkness in both the public society and the private corners of one's heart, one can discern the integrity of various spiritualities. The process of discernment moves beyond intellectual reductionism and categorizing. Discernment is identifying the inner will to possess and control, and the artificial construction of a self driven by fear and need for self-affirmation (Del Prete, 1991). In the realm of spiritual experience, it may be difficult to discern the distinction between inner stirrings of "truth", whether it be divine authority, an awareness of the communal and eternal, or self-interested consumptive compulsions.

So, in choosing among the voices and expressions of spirituality, where and how should we listen? One place to start is by examining our own biographies. For many of us it is important to acknowledge and perhaps reconcile the influence of our religious upbringing on our current spiritual preferences and resistances. Certainly we need to be critical and wary of the agendas, promises, interests, and portrayal of humans in the world embedded in a spirituality. But important as critical thinking is, this is still a rational approach that needs to be balanced with an intuitive, spiritual listening. Discernment, explains Egan (1996), is a stilling of the rambling conscious mind and a deeper awakening to the moment, a learning to be being fully present to the sacred. Egan also suggests listening to testimony of the mystics, voices of women, the poor, the marginalized, and the excluded. He writes, "We are always headed somewhere, but which wind is in our sails?" (p. 8).

The process of critical discernment amongst spiritualities is, we argue, a first step towards answering the question, What role is appropriate for an educator in terms of spirituality? There is no lack of urgings to integrate spirituality with pedagogy. Teaching and learning, Palmer (1993) suggest, are ancient communal acts that can be renewed through any practice of spiritual wisdom that welcomes inquiry and does not fear searching. Purpel (1989) also promotes infusion of the sacred into education, calling teachers to be prophets in a learning process that seeks ultimate meaning. Some educators in the tradition of Freire hear the educator's call as enabling a spiritual movement of transformation. Macpherson (1996) suggests a radical redefinition of the educator as a "healer, a therapist, and an essential catalyst of personal, social, and environmental transformation" (p. 468).

We hope this comparative framework will help educators examine more critically the many orientations of spirituality and pedagogy that incorporate spirituality; and assist educators wishing to explore, interrogate or integrate spirituality in their own and others' practice. The compelling issue remains purpose: *What is the <u>real</u> intent of pedagogical interventions (in theory or practice) which integrate or focus upon spirituality?* When educators dwell inside this question, they will ask themselves what desires motivate their interest in spirituality, where their own spiritual beliefs and actions are grounded, and what conceptions of authority and spiritual need justify the pedagogical action they find themselves desiring to undertake.

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# Canadian Research in Adult Education in The 1990's: A Cautious Cartography

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**Absract**:This paper presents the results of a collaborative mapping project undertaken by three scholars who examined leading journals, graduate theses and conference proceedings from 1990-2000. Recent trends, areas for future inquiry, and some of the tensions and dilemmas experienced while undertaking such a 'mapping'project are outlined.

## Why Map Canadian Adult Education Research?

The twentieth anniversary of CASAE appears to be an appropriate time to examine issues and themes appearing in recent adult education research in Canada. 'Mapping' projects have been undertaken by many others to help identify the boundaries and dynamics constructing the adult education field. Handbooks and encyclopedias are produced regularly amidst critique of their politics and exclusionary boundaries. In 1982, Rubenson analysed the production of knowledge in North American adult education up to that year and found an overwhelming influence of individual-focused psychology, empirical methodology, and isolationism of the field. Grace (1999) examined post-war US adult education (1945-73) and identified ideological perspectives and beliefs governing research which tended to promote coherence, coordination, community needs and professionalization to meet demands of rapid change. Renewed interest in mapping the field of adult education has appeared recently with Jarvis, Holford and Griffin (2000) noting both the fragmentation and the growth in the field, as well as new modes of teaching. They announced a major project to "demarcate" and trace back these shifts. The dramatics shifts in paradigms of contributing fields has motivated Rubenson (2000) to revisit his mapping project. Our project is similarly motivated.

We have focused our exploration on Canadian research because we believe this 20th anniversary of CASAE is a good excuse to spotlight the contributions and interests of Canadian scholars. Considering the growing global possibilities for exchanging of ideas, one weakness of this geographical closure is to perhaps falsely demarcate a community. We believe that Canadian adult education researchers share certain scholarly currents and socio-cultural influences that are unique and deserve analysis in their own right. For purposes of manageability we have delimited our period of exploration to the period 1990-1999. This was a decade of cutbacks in Canadian institutions, yet graduate student research has continued to expand, even leading the blurring of disciplinary boundaries. This period also has witnessed increased public attention and policy directed to 'lifelong learning' and training, dramatically altered modes of adult education delivery, as well as the rapid diffusion of postmodern and other new scholarly perspectives in the extant body of adult education study.

## Problems of Mapping

From the beginning of this project we focused not only on our own analyses, but also on the politics of mapping. Through email dialogue we explored our particular motivations for undertaking this mapping project, noting our biases as well as the limitations of the data. We began by discussing the colonizing impulse of map-making, the dangers of exclusion and

distortion, and the uses (intended and unintended) of the resulting products. Our own changing positionality in this process seems a crucial dimension, if difficult to discern. Shauna asked "how have our own experiences of maps and travel, whether adventure or calamity, influenced our approach? What kinds of visual impairments are inherent in the work? What places get missed because we were following only certain clues or driving down certain roads?" Shahrzad wrote about negotiating territories defined by maps. Based on her experience of the Middle East, she also argued about her search for a 'homeland' where borders are not about inclusion or exclusion only, they are also about creating identities, hopes, and homes. For Shahrzad the notion of 'bleeding borders' references the politics of location which is about crossing borders. She wrote, "I have crossed many borders into Canadian theatre of adult education, where I am trying to create a home that I can call as such, and feel that I 'belong' to. I am also crossing the border as a political dissident, because I am unhappy with what is going on. Theories that permeate our field behave like borders. They keep me out of their boundaries, and thus push me to seek refuge somewhere else, such as other disciplines." In response to Shahrzad's and Shauna's emails, Tara commented: "these reflections have been powerful for me, particularly about the politics and hazards of crossing borders and the borders and impoverishment created by certain fashionable scholarly theories and the apparent dawdling of adult education in the face of real pain, real injustice."

Following this thread, we began to identify those questions about adult education research that we wanted most to pursue in our mapping activity. In the sections below, we each address the more specific issues of why and how we are mapping particular artifacts of Canadian adult education research, how we are negotiating the territory to develop our maps, and where we are finding ourselves travelling in the process. These are answered by each researcher differently, according to her particular interests and the texts she has chosen to examine.

**Graduate Student Research – Tara Fenwick**

I believe graduate student theses in adult education are a treasure of important literature for at least three reasons. First, they present a wide diversity of issues and contexts, potentially broadening and enriching our academic understandings of what constitutes adult education. Second, they often provide a glimpse of issues brought into the academy directly from practice by practitioners. Third, theses may reflect the influences and potential utility of theories and approaches that make most sense to those who normally have little career investment in advancing particular theories and approaches in a crowded scholarly market. However, I believe that the knowledge produced in graduate student research is under-utilized. Here at the University of Alberta, students do not often publish a paper from their work unless they go on to pursue an academic career. Too often their work sits, dusty and forgotten. I wanted to put these researchers and their issues on the map, so to speak.

While theses vary in quality and passion, most painstakingly explore an issue that was significant to someone in a particular context of practice. So – what questions are these practitioner-researchers choosing to pursue? What traces do their approaches reflect of dominant discourses, hot fashions and passions in the market or the academy? What do they find out that they consider most interesting? What do they appear to avoid? I am also hoping to uncover unique questions, ideological hybrids or shifts, sites of practice-research conflicts, and approaches to conceiving the role of research. Most of all, I want to map the visions of adult education embedded in the questions and methods of these diverse studies.

I have chosen to analyse abstracts of all Master's and Doctoral theses titles listed annually in the Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education (CJSAE) from 1990-1999. While this demarcation of data yield hundreds of texts, the limitation is severe for the following reasons. First, the CJSAE lists include only those thesis titles that happened to have been submitted by institutions each year. Some institutions are not represented in certain years, even though adult education theses may have been completed. Second, the CJSAE lists normally include only those theses completed as part of a graduate program of adult education. However, much student research directly rooted in adult education is carried out in departments of nursing, pharmacology, agriculture, educational foundations, and others – particularly where institutions do not offer a formally acknowledged doctoral program in adult education for those students who in fact are studying adult education. Third, abstracts of Master's theses are sometimes difficult to obtain. (We are contacting individual institutions for assistance, but our data remain incomplete). Finally, an abstract is an extremely limited representation of a research project, and it may be inappropriate for us to attempt to address our questions using only these texts.

Nonetheless, as a starting point for the examination of graduate student theses, I have adopted and modified Rubenson's (2000) questions. What themes and fields of exploration appear to have attracted most interest among Canadian graduate student researchers in adult education? What issues and sites of contestation appear most frequently? When compared to themes and influences documented in other analyses and compilations of adult education research territory, what seems *not* to be present in Canadian graduate student research? What scholarly traditions (perspectives, methodologies, and theories) appear to influence the research efforts of graduate students in Canadian adult education in the 1990's? I am proceeding by coding each abstract for the researcher's gender, institution and level (Master's or Doctoral); the context of the study (learning location and target group); the primary and secondary topics; the methodology; and the theoretical orientation to adult education. The resulting information will be compared across categories and analysed for overall patterns. Abstracts are also being analysed qualitatively for themes, guided by the three questions above. However, the following three additional questions certainly motivate my reading of graduate these abstracts. What particularly unique questions, issues or alternative approaches appear in graduate student theses? What different conceptions of the role of research, their own role as researchers, and the relation of their research to practice can be discerned in graduate student theses? What new visions and possibilities for adult education research can be discerned in graduate student theses? While I'm unsure these can be answered reliably using my limited data, I intend to note any evidence of these issues – and perhaps 'map' them in a second phase of this project.

**Journal Review – Shahrzad Mojab**

A review[1] of six adult education journals was conducted for the period of 1990-1999: *Adult Education and Development*; *Adult Education Quarterly*; *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*; *Convergence*; *International Journal of University Adult Education*; *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*; *Studies in the Education of Adults*; and *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*. The following themes were the focus: feminism; labour/employment equity issues; anti-racism; disability issues; social justice/social movements; political participation/citizenship; and globalization. The review revealed five meta-trends in adult education in the nineties and a major shift in the theoretical underpinnings of the field. The following three conceptual shifts hint at changes in the way adult education is

[1] Rachel Gormen, a PhD student assisted with this analysis. Funding support came from a SSHRC Small Scale Grant.

structured, as well as its changing role in the global political economy. First, at the beginning of the decade, critical theory is frequently used as the framework to deal with equity and social justice issues. By the end of the decade, postmodernism has gained currency as a theoretical framework. Second, citizenship, liberatory, and radical education have historically been central to the character of adult education. Throughout the decade, these concerns give way to debate over the nature of "new social movements", and social movement learning emerges as an area of study. Third, the political economy framework for adult education that is based in Gramsci and Marx is overtaken by "transformative" or "transformation" theories of education and social change. Issues arising from the "new social movements" are subsequently interpreted through lenses of personal adaptation, individual transformation and empowerment, rather than through the more politicized, structure/power conscious political economy framework.

Globalization is introduced into the literature in the 90s, and by 1996, a special issue of *Convergence* is dedicated to it. The issue includes articles on structural adjustment, civil society, corporate propaganda, dissolving borders, and environmental degradation. Globalization emerges as a catch-all for describing the global consolidation of capitalist power, the hegemony of American-based consumer/corporate culture, and the process of networking state, non-governmental, and market interests across national boundaries. What is described as "workplace policy" or "institutional restructuring" at the beginning of the decade is subsumed under "globalization" at the end of the decade. Subsequently, globalization had become reified in the literature, and is taken up as an inevitable phenomenon, rather than a set of human-driven processes. A minority of authors dealing with globalization question the role adult education plays in the global expansion of capital.

*The Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education* is the only journal that addresses Aboriginal issues, publishing nine articles throughout the decade on literacy, learning styles, cross-cultural learning, and higher education. Queer issues and disability issues are almost completely absent from the literature, as are anti-racist issues. The latter is predominantly taken up in terms of multiculturalism, difference in learning styles, and personal narrative, rather than as a system of violence and oppression. Feminism remains a strong thread in the literature throughout the nineties. While the decade begins with a debate in *Convergence* on the limits of feminism, adult education theory and practice, and indeed adult educators themselves, seem to be committed to incorporating feminist research methodologies, and feminist pedagogy. Many strands of feminist praxis are present, including autobiography and narrative, critical pedagogy, class-based approaches, post-structuralism, counselling, and anti-violence approaches. Throughout the decade, articles on women learners in various contexts seem more grounded and solid than articles that take up queer, anti-racist, or disability issues. This may be due to the demographics of adult education researchers and practitioners, and the continued under-representation of various standpoints in the academy.

All articles related to the selected themes were identified, and the theoretical approaches were noted. Out of this list, authors who are identified with specific themes and theoretical approach were noted, along with the key points of contention between authors. Because the data sets were generated journal by journal, any major differences between journals were noted. A list of 24 key words was generated from the entire set of notes. The list included two sets of key words or phrases: the first set was related to the list of selected themes, regardless of how frequently they occurred in the notes. For example, "gay issues" and "disability issues" only occurred twice each in the notes, but were related to our selected themes. The second set were phrases or words that occur frequently in relationship to our themes, for example: "political

economy"; "learning society"; or "transformation theory". These 24 key words were then clustered into related groups, based on how they relate to each other in the literature. For example: folk schools; education for liberation; Freire; civil society; and citizenship all followed interweaving streams in the literature, often with the same authors writing on several topics in the list. The 14 remaining clusters were analyzed according to the major debates that were identified in the literature (for example: "critical theory" is often used as a framework by authors who are critical of postmodernism). The clusters were also analyzed according to the way the terminology attached to certain topics has shifted over the decade (for example: what was referred to as "restructuring" at the beginning of the decade is referred to in terms of "globalization" at the end of the decade). This resulted in five hypotheses about the major trends of the decade. The notes were then re-coded, and a chronological, integrated list of article references was generated for each of the hypotheses.

**Review of CASAE Proceedings – Shauna Butterwick**

Proceedings from nine CASAE conferences from 1990 to 1999[2], a total of 499 articles, were analysed and coded using the general categories of gender and institutional location of author(s), language (English or French), topics addressed, methodology, and theoretical framework employed[3]. It was difficult to identify institutional affiliation and whether the author(s) were faculty or students as this information was not provided on a consistent basis. We also coded for the following specific topics: anti-racism, class analysis, sexual identity, citizenship, environment, feminism, globalization, labour education, workplace learning, social justice, social movements, the theory-practice relationship, formal, informal and nonformal learning, lifelong learning, and transformative learning. The findings outlined below represent a preliminary analysis[4]. Our main questions were: what persists, what has disappeared, what has emerged and what has not been addressed.

Labour and union education issues, social justice concerns, feminism, and studies of literacy were topics that maintained a consistent presence across the decade. Formal, informal, and nonformal learning contexts were also consistently present. There were very few articles addressing the role of adult education in relation to anti-racism, class struggles, and heterosexism. Concerns with the environment also received limited attention, although it began to appear as an issue in the last few years of this decade, as did the anti-oppression foci already mentioned. There was a steady decline in the number francophone articles. The context of work and employment dominated the discourse with fewer studies which examined the role of adult education in community and civic organizations. Learning and adult education within social movements was also a persistent focus, although minor in comparison to those articles where the workplace, the learning organization, and union and labour education were central. Explorations of professional development and continuing education focused mainly on the health professions, with nursing education and practice being more frequently explored. A focus on rural adult education was infrequent and almost nonexistent at the end of the decade.

A range of methodologies were utilized including qualitative case study and ethnographic methods like interviews and participant observation, surveys and questionnaires, phenomenography, document analysis, historical analysis, action and participatory methods, and

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[2] I was unable to obtain the 1995 proceedings.

[3] Lyn Harper, a PhD student in our department assisted me with this analysis which was supported by funding from the Research Development Grant in the Faculty of Education at UBC.

[4] Further analysis will be undertaken prior to the CASAE conference.

various kinds of statistical methods. Qualitative methods, however, dominated this decade. A substantial portion of the articles were not empirically-based; position papers, literature reviews, and explorations of conceptual resources and their utility for the field were common as were articles that presented personal reflections. There were a few historical studies and relatively few inquiries that focused on policy. As Shahrzad found, most empirical work focused on individuals and there was little evidence of inquiries that employed an institutional or structural analysis.

The conceptual and theoretical approaches informing the inquiries in the CASAE proceedings were as diverse as the methodological approaches. Not surprisingly, there was a predominance of learning theory (socio-cognitive theory, constructivism, enactivism, feminist theory, e.g. 'women's ways of knowing', self-directed learning, transformative theory and andragogy). Critical theory, particularly feminist approaches, were also commonly utilized. Postmodern, often with reference to Foucault's work, as well as poststructuralist frameworks became more common during the last few years of this decade. Sociological and psychological orientations were the main disciplinary territories. On rare occasion, political economic orientations and notions of performativity, borrowed from postmodern literary theory, made an appearance. At times, it was difficult to identify what theoretical arena the authors were situating their work in. We also noted that many articles were descriptive in character with minimal evidence of theoretical or conceptual analysis.

Having completed this initial analysis we are struck with how frequently adult education in the context of work was the focus of conference papers. This raises the question of whether we can continue to claim that the field and study of adult education acknowledges the importance of learning that is life-wide and lifelong. Some of the issues we would like to further investigate include voice, use of metaphoric language, approach to theory, positionality, methodology, as well as other elements identified in dialogue with my two co-authors and with participants at the 2001 CASAE conference.

## Endnote

What comes into view, whether it be graduate theses, or journal articles or conference proceedings, is a substantial volume of work and effort undertaken by students and faculty. It speaks to adult education research and theorizing being 'on the map', having a presence, a voice, but who is listening, who are we are speaking to--each other, those outside our field of study, ourselves? This project illustrates some tensions and perhaps contradictions. We observed some evidence of reification and entrenchment, gate keeping and maintaining of borders, at the same time as witnessing movement and diversity and blurring of boundaries. What does this diversity and 'borderless' quality mean for our role as educators, for the development of adult education curricula? Is there--should there be, a 'core' or 'foundation' of adult education that informs our programs and teaching? Can this analysis help us guide students in their research? What does this analyses suggest about the future of this field's academic legitimacy? What does this analyses suggest about the potential of adult education research to contribute to action on urgent questions of a suffering world? We invite the participants of the CASAE 2001 conference to consider these questions, and to raise others, as we continue our conversation at the beginning of this millenium.

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# The Parent They Knew and the "New" Parent: Daughters' Perceptions with Dementia of the Alzheimer Type

Linda Furlini

**Abstract:** Psychosocial death is a significant dimension of the Dementia of the Alzheimer Type disease process but poorly studied. This paper explores three phases of psychosocial death that emerged from in-depth interviews with three daughters caring for a parent with this chronic illness. The phases discussed include 1) daughters creating a new relationship with their parent; 2) daughters grieving chronically throughout the illness; 3) daughters negotiating coherence between the parent that once was and the parent that exists now. Daughters' narratives reveal that witnessing the deterioration of a mind was a burdensome grave learning process that encompassed many losses. These daughters lacked appropriate education and support. Future research in this area is required to develop strategies for informal caregivers that respond to this disease process.

## Introduction

Understanding chronic dementia such as that of Dementia of the Alzheimer Type (DAT) demands recognition of its devastating consequences on individuals affected by this disease process, but equally demands recognition of its tremendous impacts on those who care for them (Albert & Drachman, 2000). I found in a previous study (Furlini, 1999) that despite trends in the literature demonstrating that caring for a person with DAT is stressful and difficult, little attention was paid to the lived experiences of informal caregivers, such as family members engaged with supporting them. The initial larger study that provided the framework for this paper captured the particular stories of three daughters who were in mid life that assumed a major supporting caregiving role in looking after a parent with DAT over a time that spanned from six to fifteen years.

One often crucial and overlooked aspect of this disease process that emerged from the original study was daughters' lived experiences with the phenomenon of psychosocial death. The purpose of this paper will be to explore three phases related to psychosocial death that arose across the three daughters' narratives meriting consideration. These three phases will include daughters' processes creating a new relationship with their parent, secondly, of grieving perpetually throughout the illness, and lastly of negotiating coherence between the parent they knew and the "new" parent.

### Review of the Literature

DAT disrupts the psychological and social fabric of persons affected by it as well as those around them. One of the most striking hidden complexities of the disease process maybe the experience of the loss of the person that once was. This disease process has been referred to as psychosocial death (Doka & Aber, 1989). Most forms of dementia such as that of DAT are chronic, and include a myriad of symptoms such as personality changes, disorientation, and behavioral manifestations (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Persons affected by this disease lose their ability to perform tasks of everyday living, as well as the ability to judge, reason, and communicate. The variant pathology of the disease process greatly influences how

informal caregivers experience psychosocial death, but other important elements influence this experience as well.

Even in the early phases of the disease, there are changes and losses in relationships between informal caregivers and the person affected by DAT (Yale, 1991). Researchers (Collins, Liken, King, and Kokinakis, 1993) have reported that health care professionals are unable to recognize the losses in relationships that informal caregivers experience as a result of this disease process. The continued physical presence without a relationship or a changed one may be one of the most important aspects of informal caregivers' experiences, but a review of the literature indicates that this issue remains mostly unexplored.

Researchers Bourgeois, Schultz, and Burgio, (1996), and Thompson and Briggs (2000) reviewed research on support and interventions for informal caregivers and concluded they demonstrated unclear and indeterminate results. Further, in most studies about informal caregivers the voices of these caregivers are omitted (Furlini, 1999). Thus, this suggests that researchers require a greater understanding of the interplay between informal caregivers and the DAT process. Studies by Ganzer and England (1994) and Collins, et al. (1993) have demonstrated the importance for health care professionals to attend to stories of family members who care for persons with DAT.

Daughters' reflective stories were unique and shaped by the particular context of each daughter's life. However, the common experience of psychosocial death cemented these stories together. My presence and personal caregiving history influenced the manner these women told me their stories, as well as the selection of the pieces they chose to tell (Furlini, 1999).

**Phases of Psychosocial Death**

The three phases of psychosocial death each stemmed from daughters' inaccessibility to the parent that had existed prior to the illness. These phases were distinctive from one another, at times existed independently, and at times blended together in modulating, and varying forms. In the first phase daughters described the perceived losses in their relationships and how these relationships were continually reconstructed according to the nature and quality of the interaction between these women and their parents. The second phase refers to the chronic grieving processes these women endured accompanied by painful thoughts and emotions that ebbed and swelled in an ongoing process. Attempting to negotiate coherence is the third phase where daughters disclosed their culturally perceived ideologies about life, illness, and death that clashed with their realities of the disease process.

*Creating a new relationship with their parents.*

The human experience of loss of relationship between daughters and their ill parents was a central concern that emerged throughout the interviews. The connections that had defined the past relationship were continuously interrupted, and transformed, and unraveled. All three daughters described as frightening discerning between the effect of disease pathology and the preexisting character of the parent. These women engaged in a process of continually attempting to reconstruct the identities of their parents and the meaning of personhood.

The relational losses these daughters experienced corresponded to the unique context of the filial relationship that had existed prior to the illness. To appreciate the individuality of the losses some context of daughters' prior filial relationship is provided. Lilliane, whose father was affected by DAT had a very close relationship with him. Sarah says that she perceived her relationship with her mother to be very close and described it as "enmeshed." Marianna, on the

other hand, did not have a close relationship with her father, and she had ambivalent and negative feelings about him.

Marianna's prior relationship with her father was poor and difficult, and he had been uninvolved and emotionally unavailable to her as she grew up. He had deceived her mother, and treated her very badly during their marriage. Below Marianna described her experiences.

> He was never there for me. What changed in my relationship now was I didn't know him anymore, he was a different person. It's very hard, very hard to express how this... how certain parts of his personality are so... highlighted, things just stand out more... and which I never saw in him before... and I never saw him helpless. He was always travelling, always did what he wanted to do, nobody stopped him. His personality changed so drastically that I couldn't relate and I didn't know if it was the real person. Then, there were things he used to say that make sense, you know, it was very confusing, very confusing. He calls my name sometimes, and he even said, "I love you," when he never, never said this to me before. My mom says to him, "It's too late, you should have said this before," and I tell her he doesn't understand. If I ask him, "How are you?" he says he's fine, and I think, "you're dying and you tell me you're fine?" What kind of disease is this? I don't even know what word to use. It's overwhelming ... you tell me you're fine? It just drives me crazy, I mean you don't want to become crazy but you could easily. This new person that came from who knows where, telling me, pretending to be my dad because he looks like my dad, the face, the name... he's telling me he cares for me, but he's a stranger. I don't know it just screws me up.

When Marrianna's father told her he loved her, this contradicted her past losses in her filial relationship, and made her long for some resolution with him. She was constantly reminded that she was unable to connect with her father in the past and constantly reminded she could not connect with him in the present or in the future. The incongruity between Marianna's losses in her past filial relationship, and her father's continued physical presence, and his present verbalized expression of love together powerfully disturbed her. This aspect of the disease process magnified her losses and heightened her feelings of sadness and frustration.

Sarah described her loss in the relationship with her mother who had been obliged to raise Sarah and her sister without a father, and had struggled greatly to provide for them.

> She had been really more than a mother, really, really a best friend, she was my confidant. I told her everything; there was nothing we couldn't talk about. I lost my major support system in life. You know they say a person's happiness is really dependant on their social network, on their support system, well, she was such a support for me personally, as a mother, as a friend, as a grandmother, she was phenomenal. When I felt my mother walk into my house, my whole body relaxed. This woman could listen at nauseam to me, anytime of the day or night, she was there for me. I really lost... not to be ungrateful for having a husband or children, but I really felt like I lost half my life, like half my life. It's horrible; it's torture for nothing this disease. As far as I'm concerned, it doesn't hold any meaning. The last six years of my mother's life were not meaningful; she wasn't able to share a thing. She just scared the hell out of herself and us. It's changed so much of how I feel about life and about what life really is and what is truly meaningful in life, and it isn't the physical presence ... it's the brain that makes the

person present to us, that makes the relationship meaningful. It scared me so, and it's changed the way I see life, it's changed the way I see death. It's a constant struggle, you don't want your parent mistreated, but on the other side, you're also struggling internally not wanting your parent to continue living this way. It's important for others to be sensitized to the fact that they may be looking at it as a chronic illness but I am looking at it as a very slow and painful death and sometimes it's just too painful. It's too hard to go and visit someone who isn't there. It's the same thing as going to visit someone who's out having tests, would you stay the whole time in the room if the patient wasn't there? It looked like a bad imitation of my mother, and nobody was there, and all I could see in her eyes was horror, terror, fear, and confusion. It's not like other diseases where even if they're sick you can kiss them on the forehead and they feel safe knowing you're around. There's no reaching this person, and there is no consolation for her. I mean after a while you don't want to visit a drowning person if you're not going to be able to throw them a life raft.

Sarah tried to grasp at the meaning of the relationship that presently existed with her mother, and the tremendous pain this disease process had caused her.

Lillianne also experienced deep losses in her relationship with her father as a result of the disease' destructive effects on her connection with her father. Her father had been a businessman and a scholar, and she felt his losses intensely.

> The first loss I noticed was the loss of humor because we had shared the same sense of humor, and we used to, we used to not exactly banter, we used to sort of exchange things that we would know would please the other and make the other laugh. It was a very important loss because it was like a really intimate way of relating to one another. ...As his daughter he was no longer the parent that you could seek advice from, and he could no longer play the role of parenting.
>
> I remember during the illness we had this whole conversation and he thought I was this so and so person, who didn't know his daughter. My father hadn't recognized me, so he started to talk to me about his daughter Lilianne. So, he started to talk about how Lilianne was such a wonderful person, and he went on, and said some really nice things about me. It was really funny. And it was funny, but it was not funny. It was hair-raising because he didn't know who I was. I couldn't lean on him, but I felt this tremendous love for him. It's very sad, terribly sad, I mean it's this thing about mourning before the person dies. It's definitely true, well true for me.

Lillianne's experience served as a double-edged sword to remind her how her much her father loved her, yet unable to engage in a reciprocal relationship with him.

Another disconcerting aspect of this disease process was parents' fleeting moments of lucidity. Mirages of daughters' parents past selves that surfaced and disappeared suddenly set these daughters up to destabilize them further. Daughters constantly vacillated precariously between feeling connected and disconnected with their parents. Despite the long duration of the illness these daughters did not reach a stage of acceptance of the losses in the relationship with their parents.

*Grieving Perpetually about the "Parent Lost."*

These women tried to guard themselves against divulging their upsetting experiences during their interviews by on occasion deflecting questions about their relationships and feelings associated with their parents. Describing their experiences of psychosocial death was elusive, and laborious for them. Jones and Martinson (1992) state that the continued physical presence of a person affected by DAT may generate acute emotional dissonance for their caregivers. These women stated that they had repressed many of the emotions that accompanied their grief and they felt very isolated. These daughters' lack of understanding about psychosocial death, and their accompanying losses were intensified by professionals' lack of understanding about this issue. They often felt labeled as hysterical, untrustworthy, or mentally unstable, whereas their grief remained invisible, unacknowledged and unaddressed. Meagher (1989) states that when an individual is deprived of an opportunity to perform the tasks of grief work, the grief becomes disenfranchised.

Sarah gave some poignant insights into her feelings of grief and lack of closure.

> One of the many horrible things about this disease is that it takes such a long time, ... it happens so slowly. It's so slow, and it takes so many years that by the time it's over you're robbed of even treasuring your memories because the memories you need to treasure are from so long ago, and so buried, and you've spent at least 10-15 years not wanting to think of them because you couldn't bear what's happening to your parent now. So when it's over, you cannot grieve in a way that could be healing. There was no vacation from grief. Because you're left with a shell, it's like a photograph of somebody. You're left with a photograph and in the end of Alzheimer's, even the photograph disintegrates, and doesn't even physically resemble that person anymore. So you are robbed of everything in the most slow, painful way you could possibly imagine. I mean just horrible, horrible, just to have to stand back and watch somebody you love being tortured, it's double torture. The affect is gone, the facial expression is gone, the eyes are dead and for anyone who's seeing someone dead with their eyes open that's what it looks like. There's nothing you can do and nobody wants to listen and there is no help and it can go on forever. I think what I've learned most of all was that really what you're dealing with twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week without any vacation is grief. Nobody prepares you for that.

As DAT went unabated on for such extended lengths of time, daughters' prolonged unrelenting grief compounded over time, and they engaged in chronic grieving. For these women, their parents' physical presence set up expectations that they would have opportunities to interact with their parents. Instead, their interactions with their parents' were distorted, and their parents' were not able to answer their needs. Collins et al. (1993) stress a need for early recognition of the grief experiences of informal caregivers of persons with dementia, and that the issues these caregivers confront are unique.

*Negotiating Coherence between the parent daughters knew and the "new" parent.*

Psychosocial death was a concept that was alien to these daughters yet evident in each of their lived experiences. As they questioned their personal belief and value systems, they asked themselves what defined a human being. These daughters reevaluated their personal expectations about the definition of life, about what it meant to be ill, and about the dying process. This

disease process damaged daughters' sense of coherence about their lives, and became a threat to their well being.

Culturally constructed definitions about human beings, illness, and death neglect the psychosocial death experience. As persons affected by DAT are slowly detaching from their psychic entities, it is not clear how society redefines or views the individual. DAT challenges cultural assumptions and expectations about how life's processes about life, illness, and death will evolve. Ultimately, these cultural assumptions, expectations, and attitudes clashed with these daughters' perceptions of the parent under their care, and their lived caregiving experiences associated with their parents' disease. Further, other than the influences of the larger societal contexts in which they lived, each of these daughters' were influenced by the unique cultural contexts specific to their situation and background.

## Conclusion

The three phases of psychosocial death encompassed daughters' direct and indirect losses, emotional outcomes, and larger societal issues. For researchers and professionals these phases present challenges and alternate possibilities for creating and offering education and support in regard to informal caregivers.

These daughters related how they unconsciously deliberated new relationships with their ill parents throughout the course of the illness while being simultaneously unaware of the losses bound up with this disease process. Their experiences of loss were singularly about context because of the uniqueness of their unraveling relationships and disintegrating connections. A goal for those who attend to informal caregivers must be to recognize how this disease process insidiously and adversely affects relationships and past connections.

These women were in a state of constant mourning, and grieved chronically. The harmful cumulative effects of this ever-progressing disease process had detrimental effects on these women whose the right to grieve was hindered. Researchers and health care professionals who interact with informal caregivers may perceive informal caregivers as dysfunctional rather than as persons with little knowledge and support for learning to respond effectively and cope with distress and grief. Grief counseling education should be promoted for professionals and researchers that attend to these caregivers.

Differentiating between the illness and the person that existed prior to the illness was a process that was difficult to label and ruptured daughters' sense of coherence about their lives. Working out revised expectations about life, illness, and death processes was very difficult due to the nature of the disease process. Cultural and societal awareness of the psychosocial type of death experience is warranted. This can be accomplished by learning from informal caregivers' perspectives to take into account both the larger and specific cultural frameworks in which they live.

From what can be garnered from these daughters' testimonies is that they entered into a burdensome, educational and emotional learning experience. These daughters' narratives provide access and necessary insight to uncovering and understanding the uniqueness and elusive qualities of these caregivers' experiences that outsiders do not have. Researchers advocate including narrative work into research and practice contexts to educate professionals on how to intervene (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, Ganzer & England, 1994). Thus, as has been presented, narratives are an effective tool in research and clinical practice for developing strategies for informal caregivers that provide effective education and support programs. Ultimately, by addressing the needs and perceptions of informal caregivers with respect to losses corresponding

to psychosocial death, societal awareness and inclusiveness of this type of death experience is advanced.

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# Being, Becoming, and Belonging as a Queer Citizen Educator: The Places of Queer Autobiography, Queer Culture as Community, and Fugitive Knowledge

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**Abstract**:This essay explores personal, political, and pedagogical dimensions of bringing queer culture as community and the fugitive knowledge it generates to bear on academic culture as knowledge. In doing so, it takes up issues of being, becoming, and belonging as a queer person and citizen.

In 1973 in an essay entitled *Relentless Verity,* J. Roby Kidd accentuated the importance of education for being, becoming, and belonging. In this essay I explore his theme from queer perspectives. First, I engage the theme in terms of my own autobiography as a queer person and citizen educator in post-millennial Canadian education. I link my queer life narrative, which I describe as a situated social and cultural text, to my political and pedagogical task to build inclusive educational practices that confront the dominant culture-language-power mix that still disparages queer identities and assaults queer integrity. Second, I speak to the theme in terms of revising academic culture as knowledge so that it recognizes, inserts, respects, and values queer culture as community and its fugitive knowledge base. I consider Canadian legal and legislative change processes that represent slow and incremental support for queer inclusion and, in this light, I discuss the need for citizen educators to engage issues of sexual orientation and the politics of culture-language-power in a revised inclusive education for citizenship.

## Autobiographical Queer Life Narrative as a Social and Cultural Text

For me, autobiographical queer life-narrative research is a critical engagement with the queer self that investigates the personal and difficult journey to be, become, belong, act, speak, and represent oneself as a queer person, citizen, and educator in diverse cultural and social spaces. This journey, which is always caught up in the interplay of epistemologies, contexts, relationships of power, and ethical and moral attitudes and values, takes place in the intersection of the personal and professional. Here identities, identifications, socialities, disposition, history, culture, and politics shape, mark, and position the queer self (Grace & Benson, 2000). From this perspective, autobiographical queer life-narrative research is a social and cultural text that is dramatized in life spaces amid inevitable tensions and conflicts (Grace, forthcoming). It is in these spaces that our civil rights movement to attain the rights and privileges of full citizenship takes place. Its aim is to subvert a heterosexualizing culture and society that deprecates us in a defaming, exclusionary litany: outsiders, outlaws, deviants, and sinners.

### *Vignette 1 – Nailed to a Faggot Cross: Yet Another Encounter with No-Heart "Christians"*

Let me preface my story with remarks about diversity in the context of the broad Christian community. There are many kinds of Christians, but here I will mention two groups. I call the first group *brave-heart* Christians. I've encountered them, for example, in my work in Edmonton with Diversity Conferences of Alberta. These Christians from different faith groups engage in political and pedagogical community work to achieve space and place for lesbian, gay, bisexual,

and transgendered (LGBT) persons in church and other sociocultural contexts. They respect and honor me, and I respect and honor them.

I call the second group *no-heart* "Christians." Here I italicize the term to indicate the un-*Jesus* like cultural politics of this group. Epitomized perhaps most notoriously by followers of Pastor Fred Phelps, this small but determined group assaults the integrity of LGBT persons in word and action. For example, Pastor Phelps's Westboro Baptist Church congregation in Topeka, Kansas regularly engages in anti-queer picketing. They demonstrated at the October, 1998 funeral of Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old gay man who was savagely beaten to death in a Wyoming hate crime. Their "bible" is the hate literature spewed at websites operated by the "family" of Pastor Phelps: www.godhatesfags.com and www.godhatesamerica.com.

I encountered no-heart "Christians" once again on the weekend of March 17, 2001, when more than one hundred queer persons and straight allies came together for the 4th annual *Breaking the Silence* Conference at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. We assembled in the Quance Lecture Theatre in the College of Education to share, dialogue, and deliberate as a spectral community of LGBT and straight citizen educators who work in the intersection of sexual orientation, culture, and education. Each time we entered the building we had to run the gauntlet of a small group of no-heart "Christians" who provided us with one more experience of hell on earth. They carried placards that slandered us with such phrases as "Sodomy will destroy our school systems;" "Jesus Christ can heal the homosexual;" and "Don't let sodomy ruin our children." Maligning phrases like these demonize queer persons in a scourging, exclusionary, no-heart "Christian" language that suggests that we are sick, deviant, and disgusting perpetrators of abomination. Inspired by Old Testament narratives like Romans I, such scurrilous, heteronormalized "Christian" language is the abomination.

When faced with such encounters, I no longer turn the other cheek. I confront culturally myopic, no-heart "Christians." I express my anger, disgust, and hurt, and then I move on to continue the struggle in community with other queer persons and straight allies. These days we can be heartened by the fact that we are knee deep in a *fags-in-your-face* civil rights movement that has made incremental progress in this country, especially since 1969 when the government of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau decriminalized "homosexuality." However, that year remains bittersweet in my memory. I spent 1969 in the hell of Grade IX in a Catholic high school where I was taunted, stalked, and otherwise abused in a series of sexist and heterosexist violences that mark the life of a young person already labeled a sissy-boy fag.

Today I use *queer* and *fag* as part of my vocabulary of written and spoken words. I am unapologetic when I use them in both queer and straight company. I use these terms that jerk the body instead of the saccharine term *gay*, even though I know that term is also often used with defaming homophobic intent. For me, using queer and fag is a sanguine inversion of terms that puts the language of heterosexist oppressors back in their faces. I see these faces as I negotiate my everyday, and I see them in my troubled dreams. Lines of homophobic determination contort these faces; the lines are made deep by hate, fear, and ignorance of queerness.

Maybe someday conferences like *Breaking the Silence* won't have to exist as a social and cultural oasis for queer Canadians and citizen educators. Maybe someday I'll be safe from no-heart "Christians" who fuel a queer/straight binary of indifference with their dismissal, denial, or disregard of those they other as deviant fags. Maybe someday I'll be considered a full citizen, a whole person, a real Canadian. I am hopeful. I witnessed the power of queer people and straight allies in Saskatoon. I witnessed people in community engaged in a civil rights movement. I saw people smiling, hugging, speaking out, and creating dialogic and deliberative spaces. I heard

them talking about inclusive education that transgresses heteronormativity. I heard them commit to taking incremental actions to raise queer visibility in homes, schools, shopping malls, and other sociocultural sites where heterosexism is visible in word, action, and representation. I reveled to be there in this sharing and nurturing space, a space where I was one proud queer person and citizen educator.

Autobiographical life-narrative vignettes such as this one are integral to my educational and larger cultural project aimed at pronouncing *queerness* as a natural and normal and affirming that *queerness is*. They contribute to a pedagogy of visibility that focuses on queer knowledge and culture as it brings heterosexualizing language, history, and norms into question. This critical questioning is a political and pedagogical task in which I struggle with issues of naming, representing, and making meaning and sense of my queer identity-difference and positionality. Through this struggle I come to terms with ways to see, remember, speak, act, imagine, and resist as a queer person. This work is central to inclusive education and queer cultural politics that invert the normal by exploring how queer thinking and acting disrupt heteronormative epistemological, linguistic, existential, and strategic conventions and constructs (Tierney, 1997).

**Inserting Queer Culture as Community, Fracturing Academic Culture as Knowledge**

Raymond Williams's search for a lived or knowable community in the struggle to move within British class structures became an exploration of culture as community versus culture as knowledge (Grossberg, 1997). For Williams, to know community was an intensely personal experience that involved a struggle between these two cultures. Culture as community is socially formed, lived, and represented in sociocultural spaces like home places and workplaces, and through the attachments developed there. Culture as knowledge derives from formalized knowledge that is associated with the intellectual world and the culture of academe. It tends to dismiss culture as community as popular (and hence a lesser form of) culture. Thus, while culture as community is itself culture as a kind of knowledge, it is often devalued.

This cultural divide, at least from queer perspectives, is still apparent in Canadian academic adult education. Popular queer knowledge, which Hill (1996) calls fugitive knowledge, and queer culture as community have been barely recognized in mainstream practice's culture as knowledge. (See, for example, *Learning for Life: Canadian Readings in Adult Education,* which was published in 1998). The following narrative vignette provides some examples of Canadian queer culture as community and fugitive knowledge. It is pedagogically useful to academic adult educators who engage in inclusive education and transgressive forms of education for citizenship.

*Vignette 2 – Paying Taxes, Paying the Price to Live a Taxing Life: Please Invert the Normal*

Queer persons are treated as lesser persons and citizens in Canada. We have never known critical citizenship that attends to democracy, freedom, equity, and social justice in ways that we can be, become, and belong as visible and vocal queer persons who live and walk unafraid. Instead, we experience social limits and cultural barriers to living in our everyday. We live, learn, and work in an uncivil culture and society where we monitor our appearance, action, and speech for safety and security reasons. However, plaid shirts, blue jeans, boots, and a John Wayne swagger don't always prevent the verbal assaults – *You fucking faggot!* – or the physical threats – *Run you faggot while your blood is still inside your body!* – that I've experienced on the streets of St. John's, Halifax, or Edmonton, which are all cities that I've called "home" over the years. Such is my experience of heterosexist civility. Such is what I still know.

While discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation is prohibited by provincial human rights legislation in Alberta, my current "home" province still has one of the worst records on queer civil rights and the extension of benefits in our country. In its summary of how provinces treat LGBT citizens, EGALE (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere), a Canadian national organization committed to achieving equality and justice for queer persons, relates that Alberta did not move on its own to extend provincial human rights legislation to prohibit discrimination against queer persons. The move only followed a long-awaited unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on April 2, 1998 in the Delwin Vriend case. Vriend, an educator at Kings College, Edmonton had been dismissed in 1991 on the pretext that his employment violated the institution's anti-queer religious policy. When the Supreme Court decided in Vriend's favor in his legal challenge to have sexual orientation read into the Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act, the government of Alberta chose to put up with the decision.

A late 1998 EGALE document entitled *Canada Watch: Who's Doing What* records these life-and-work realities that deny queer Albertans the supports for partnership and family in a traditional heteronormative context. Equal workplace benefits are not available to partners of queer government employees. Equal pension benefits are not available to queer employees. A queer person cannot make medical decisions on behalf of an incapacitated life partner. Queer couples cannot adopt or foster children. Child and spousal support provisions are not extended to queer couples. In this dim light, queer Albertans can certainly describe their status as uncitizens in a heterosexualizing uncivil culture and society. Reprieve comes only from Ottawa with the federal government decision in 1999 to overhaul many pieces of legislation that have disenfranchised queer citizens, especially in regard to partner benefits. However, institutional and political self-preservation prompts Ottawa's decision. Over the last decade, legislative changes have been instigated by court challenges, challenges the government of Canada knows it is likely to lose in cases where federal laws treat queer and straight persons and couples unequally. Any unequal treatment, of course, violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The 1999 federal government decision follows other changes in federal legislation during the 1990s that demonstrate a trend of slow, incremental progress in our queer civil rights movement. Significant changes include those that allow queer persons to serve in the military (1992), amend the Criminal Code to provide increased penalties for hate crimes on grounds that include sexual orientation (1995), and amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination against queer persons and citizens (1996). These changes do not constitute special rights for us. Instead, they represent long overdue recognition of the need to undo the damage of heterosexualizing societal and systemic structures that relegate queer persons to status as uncitizens. As EGALE (1998) asserts, "Government benefits should not be a 'moral reward' for being in a relationship of which the State approves, but should be tailored to meet the needs of all members of society."

While queer Canadians have gained increased civil rights in legal and legislative arenas, queerness has still not been substantially and pervasively affirmed as a normal way to be, become, and belong in the larger Canadian sociocultural arena and its tributaries like the mainstream practice of adult education. Thus central to my political and pedagogical project to invert the normal are explorations of the relationships between queerness and culture, and queerness and adult education. Here I engage queer autobiography, queer culture as community, and fugitive knowledge in my work. They add valuable insights to dialogic and deliberative teaching-learning interactions that I design to revise education for citizenship as an inclusive

cultural practice. They assist me in my efforts to build civic community from cultural, political, and personal perspectives.

When inclusive academic adult educators walk the line between academic culture as knowledge and queer culture as community, we negotiate our way in an unsettled border zone that exposes the problems of living in the spaces in between what Freire (1998) calls the word and the world. From Williams's perspective, the uneasy task of the educator in this in-between space is to transgress traditional academic culture as knowledge, which has historically denied culture as community (Grossberg, 1997). From a queer perspective, this means working to raise the value of ways of knowing and understanding associated with sexual orientation and queer history, culture, and community attachments. In other words, this means working to raise the value of queer culture as community and fugitive knowledge. Of course, revising what knowledges have worth in academic adult education is difficult work. It situates the field of study as a site of cultural struggle where queer culture as community and fugitive knowledge have to fight for space and place in an academic culture-power nexus that values culture as knowledge. Historically, academic adult education has tied adult learning and development to traditional understandings of self-direction, individualism, family, and community that are acceptable within the exclusionary confines of a heterosexualizing culture and society. Of course, this is problematic for me. I have primarily learned to be, become, and belong in queer culture as community. This is counter-learning to what one learns in mainstream practice. In a reflection inspired by Williams's predicament of living between cultures, Grossberg (1997) captures the reality of trying to live, learn, and work across such a cultural divide:

> Culture then defined a problem of place and belonging or participation. ... Power was not seen as something external, eliminatable, a mere interruption of some idealized image of cultural processes. Instead, [the link between culture and power] ... began with an assumed distance between culture [as knowledge] and [culture as] community, with the notion that power always fractures culture. Hence culture was always more than just a process, for it involved struggles between competing sets of practices and relations, and that sense of struggle meant that it was inevitably tied up with relations of power. (p. 249)

If inclusive academic educators are to make meaning and sense of living and learning between cultures, then a critical queer pedagogy might help in the mediation between queer culture as community and academic culture as knowledge. This insurgent pedagogy could help to expose and ascertain why the dominant culture-language-power mix continues to violate queer identities and assault queer integrity in everyday life, learning, and work despite the progress that queer Canadians have made in legal and legislative arenas. It could locate inclusive educators in an evolving dialogical and deliberative project in which social transformation and the advancement of cultural democracy are key goals of communicative learning and inclusive pedagogical practices. In building a critical queer pedagogy, I start by turning to the history and culture of critical pedagogy and its emancipatory educational project. Of course, I recognize the historical failure of critical pedagogy to address adequately issues and concerns raised in the intersection of sexual orientation, culture, and schooling. Nevertheless, critical pedagogy provides a set of principles that can help developers of a critical queer pedagogy to begin "thinking [about] the practice" (Freire, 1998, p. 77).

For example, in his important text *Teaching Against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility,* Canadian academic educator Roger Simon (1992) asserts that a turn to critical

pedagogy is a reflexive way to assess and challenge traditions, conventions, fixed thinking, and relationships of power. His critical pedagogical project is to place the teaching-learning interaction within new, workable social and cultural structures that enhance possibilities for education for citizenship. This means paying "attention to what one might call the 'social imaginary,' the way of naming, ordering, and representing social and physical reality whose effects simultaneously enable and constrain a set of options for practical action in the world" (p. 37). Using this principle, a critical queer pedagogy inserts the social imaginary of the spectral community of LGBT persons and citizens into a dialogic and deliberative teaching-learning interaction as a cultural practice of power. In this encounter, educators and learners think about possibilities and constraints on queer pedagogical practices in terms of big social and cultural pictures that affect productive power, queer educator and learner positionality, queer cultural representation, and possible transgressive action. Simon asserts that the creation, distribution, and display of such a cultural practice of power are central to meaning making, imagination, and revising what is valuable, significant, and desirable.

> For this reason, the production of ... [queer] forms of image, text, gesture, and talk – as well as their ordered presentation and effects to influence their mediation – have to be understood as integral to the possibility of ... the transformation of any social order. In other words, cultural practices matter, and the modes and conditions of their production deserve close attention. (Simon, 1992, p. 37)

From this perspective, cultural practices are political and pedagogical acts. In a critical queer pedagogical practice, they become part of teaching and learning to transgress in insurgent ways that aid and abet cultural change and inclusive education.

## Concluding Perspective

Mainstream academic adult education has been remote from the struggle of LGBT persons to attain the rights and privileges of full citizenship accorded the majority of persons whose sexual orientation is unquestioned (Hill, 1995). If we are to be inclusive academic adult educators, then we have to change this and let queer individuals be, become, and belong as educators, learners, persons, and citizens.

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# A Search for Sustainable Livelihoods Within Global Marketplaces: Stories of Learning and Change Among Rural Artisans in Thailand.

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**Abstract:** Community-based artisan enterprise development is a significant site of adult learning in rural Thailand. Sop Moei Arts enables poor Pwo Karen women and men to earn fair wages for work that draws from indigenous knowledge of weaving, encourages learning and innovation related to product development, and strengthens their communities.

Globally, rural artisans are learning to bridge social, cultural and economic divides to ensure the sustainability of their communities. Indigenous craft knowledge, skills, and aesthetics are being utilized to promote income generation and fair trade in the global marketplace. Livelihoods and cultural practices are being transformed as artisan enterprises strengthen local economies. This paper, based on research in Thailand, focuses on adult learning in the context of community enterprise development among weavers in rural North Thailand.

Globalization and the Asian economic crisis of 1997 have had profound impact on the lives of millions in Asia. Poverty is severe in rural Thailand where people did not benefit from the boom years of Thailand's economic development; rather, they became victims of environmental destruction, industrialization, marginalization and displacement (Laird, 2000). Among the rural poor are artisans, many of whom are moving away from traditional livelihoods. Lack of access to raw materials and to markets, exploitation by middlemen, low prices for long hours of work, and the devaluing of rural village ways of life, keep wages at poverty level and undermine the sustainability of artisan communities.

However, the crafts sector is significant to the informal economy of Asia, especially as rural non-farm employment (Fisher, Mahajan & Ashok, 1997). For many women, craftwork is a primary source of income that contributes to the economic viability of families and communities. Artisans, who combine crafts production and trade with domestic and subsistence activities, are reaching wider regional and global markets (Grimes & Milgram, 2000). Many community-based organizations are increasing the value of artisan activity by supporting the dignity and autonomy of artisans, continuity of indigenous knowledge and cultural diversity, and sustainability of local economies and communities (Jongeward, 2000).

## Sop Moei Arts

In this paper, I focus on the story of one of the 10 organizations in North and Northeastern Thailand where I talked with people who are knowledgeable about the complex issues involved in improving artisan livelihoods. Sop Moei Arts is a unique community development project in Pwo Karen[1] villages in an isolated mountainous region, 280 kilometres west of Chiang Mai in North Thailand. The story of Sop Moei Arts stands out for three reasons: successful integration of projects for health, education, agriculture and income generation; high

[1]One percent of the Thai population, 800,000 people, belongs to nine groups known as hilltribes. The largest group is the Karen, comprised of two linquistically distinct sub-groups: 80% are Sgaw and 20% are Pwo Karen. (Eliot & Bickersteth, 1999, pp. 335-337).

quality of artisan products; and, commitment to on-going learning and innovation. In the context of Sop Moei Arts, community building involves appreciating the value of age-old cultural knowledge, creating opportunities for learning new ideas and skills, and connecting people in a remote region to the global marketplace.

The project director, Kent Gregory, originally from Sweden, is a Thai citizen who speaks Thai and Karen languages. I met Kent Gregory in Chiang Mai, where he told me his story of Sop Moei Arts. In 1977, he and his wife came to Thailand, with Masters of Public Health, to begin a health programme in remote villages that had no government health services, no roads, no schools, no NGOs. They set up a mobile health clinic in the Sop Moei District, specializing in maternal and child health care, and traveled from village to village by elephant, the only means of transport in the area. With the support of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), for ten years they tried to reduce child malnutrition, which affected 60-65% of the children. Since there were no schools in the mountain villages and the Karen living there were illiterate, they started a scholarship program in 1979 by finding sponsors to help pay school and accommodation expenses for children to attend Thai schools outside the area. Beginning in 1980, an agriculture project was supported by SIDA to improve soil fertility, increase food production and curtail the destruction of forests due to traditional Pwo Karen practices of slash and burn agriculture. About 80 families were helped to establish terraced rice farming until there was no more space in the mountains that could be terraced and irrigated.

Severely malnourished children could be helped temporarily by giving supplementary foods but the cycle of malnutrition recurred because children needed more protein foods. The people didn't have enough rice and it was almost impossible for them to go outside the area to get rice. And since they basically had a bartering economy, there was no money to buy rice or even the cheapest fish. Seeing that child malnutrition would not go down until the Karen could earn some money, in 1988, Kent Gregory applied for and received a six-year grant from SIDA, to help women earn an income using their indigenous weaving skills.

*Developing New Products*

Karen women have long been prolific weavers. They use backstrap looms[2] to weave lengths of warp ikat[3] cotton cloth that is used for sewing traditional garments. The first major adaptation instigated by the weaving project was to introduce a new loom, which could produce a wider fabric and thereby increase the possibilities for developing different products for sale. They found a large upright frame loom along the Burmese border, which served as a prototype. They took it apart, brought it back to the village and used it to design their new looms. In order to build their looms as cheaply as possible, they felled trees and sawed the lumber by hand.

Belonging to cohesive communities, the Karen are used to working together, not individually. They help on each other's farms. The women, used to backstrap weaving in a

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[2] The backstrap loom, found from the Far East to South America is frameless and portable. The warp (vertical threads) is stretched between two rods; one is fastened to an immovable post and the other to a strap that passes around the back of the weaver who typically sits on the ground. The body of the weaver controls the tension of the warp. The width of the cloth produced is limited to the reach of the body from side to side. (Collingwood, 1982, p.117.)

[3] Ikat is a resist-dye technique of patterning cloth, widespread in Southeast Asia. In warp ikat, the warp threads are tied with a material that resists the action of the dye. The tied threads are dyed, retied, dyed again through a number of cycles to build up a colour pattern. After dyeing is completed, all the ties are undone and the warp is carefully strung on the loom. In weaving the cloth, the plain weft (crosswise threads) links the patterned warp revealing an intricate complex design (Conway, 1992).

collective space, often help each other in weaving, for example, when a thread breaks. As a consequence of setting up the large new looms in women's homes, the weavers became separated from each other. They hated the isolation and stopped weaving. When SIDA learned why the women stopped weaving, they provided funds to build a weaving center where people could go to learn and work together.

The women learned to weave on the new looms, making fabric up to 40 inches wide. They continued to make traditional textiles, taking inspiration from their local motifs and patterns, but working on a larger scale. According to terms of funding from the Swedish Government, the women were supposed to become entrepreneurs, sell their own textiles, and over time, work off the cost of their looms. Three years into the weaving project, weavers confronted many difficulties when they began to try to sell their own textiles. To go outside their district to find buyers, the women had to walk two days over the mountains. The first people they encountered were poor Thai farmers. Then there was a language barrier, because the Karen do not speak Thai. Thai buyers in town took advantage of them as tribal people and beat down the price of their work. Then they found that local markets, such as in Chiang Mai, were already selling ethnic textiles with hilltribe motifs at extremely low prices.

Kent Gregory realized that the Pwo Karen women would continue to live in poverty if they tried to compete in the local markets. He advised SIDA that the project would collapse unless the women could weave as a collective and find new ideas to make and add value to the textiles. To meet this challenge, Sop Moei Arts began as community enterprise. They decided to pay weavers four times the typical low rate for weaving in Thailand. But in order to bear the higher price, they had to create a different look for their textiles. They decided to team up with international designers to take inspiration from local textiles and create products for contemporary use.

Ethnic textiles, including traditional Karen textiles, are exuberant in colour and motifs. However, they have limited use in commercial products unless modified, for example, by selecting one motif and making it monochromatic, or using only two or three colours. The first fashion designer to work with the weavers came from England to the villages for five weeks to look at local motifs and develop ideas and sketches for garments. Gregory learned to interpret her drawings, translate the motifs into weaving patterns, which he figured out how to weave and then taught the weavers what to do. For five years this collaboration produced garments, which the designer took to England for sale at exhibitions. Subsequently, with the idea to make clothing more suited to Thai women, Gregory began to design jackets and vests himself based on the look of hilltribe garments. However, due to many contingencies in producing and selling fashion items--the colour, price, and occasion for wearing them all have to be right--Sop Moei Arts shifted emphasis to developing products for home interiors. These include tablemats and runners, wall hangings, and baskets.

Low prices and competition from cheap commercial products signal the end to local production of traditional craft items, including baskets. Pwo Karen baskets, indigenous to the Sop Moei District, can be found for sale inexpensively in Chiang Mai shops. The men who make them earn very little. In 1992, within a year of the building of a road into their district, indigenous basket making quickly began to disappear. For example, men used to make a little sewing basket for women, taking about one week to go and get the bamboo, prepare the bamboo and the rattan, and then weave a basket. With the arrival of the road, merchants brought cheap little plastic buckets, which people began to buy.

Seeing that the local basketry was going to disappear, Sop Moei Arts began a basket programme for men. They didn't have external funding, but they used the little income they had started to generate from the textiles. Using as models old baskets that Gregory had found over the years in antique shops, they reintroduced six Pwo Karen baskets that had stopped being made a generation or two earlier. They also began to make baskets based on Lao and Vietnamese traditional baskets, retaining all the details of the originals.

*Extending Market Options*

Increasing access to markets is a fundamental concern of artisan enterprises. In the early years as a member of the non-profit fair trade organization, the Thai Craft Association, Sop Moei Arts participated at ThaiCraft Fairs in Bangkok. In 1997, to increase their visibility and sales, Sop Moei Arts opened a shop in Chiang Mai. The shop was a necessary extension of the weaving project because the expansion of markets was critical to giving more people in the villages an opportunity to participate and benefit. Gradually, by word of mouth or through magazine articles, more visitors came into the shop. In three years, Sop Moei Arts was becoming known, not only in Chiang Mai but also regionally. Although they don't have money for advertising, they have been featured in several Thai magazines, Japanese publications and El Décor. Journalists, impressed by the shop in Chiang Mai, have traveled to the villages with their photographers to record the story of Sop Moei Arts.

By means of exhibitions four times a year at the Hilton Hotel, and a small shop run by volunteers, Sop Moei Arts reaches the marketplace in Bangkok. More recently, a website promotes their work globally; and it reflects the same attention to detail and pride in the community as do their artisan products. Images and stories represent the work of Sop Moei Arts, including examples of textiles and baskets with the dimensions and prices. Of particular interest is the image of a wall hanging that won the Japanese Foreign Minister's Award at the Asian Arts Festival in 1998. The success of this textile, woven in the village and selected for exhibition at the Museum of Art in Fukuoka, Japan, thrilled the people of Sop Moei Arts. Reproductions of the award winning wall hanging are now part of a collection of 15 one-of-a kind artworks for sale in the shop or by Internet.

*Learning and innovation*

Quality control, a major challenge for artisan enterprises, prompted a crisis about two years into the weaving project. When the women began earning a wage from weaving, they faced a demand to make good quality work. Many women created beautiful work right from the start, but others did not. Traditionally, no one dictated about the quality of the weaver's work, but now they were being paid for making cloth intended for sale. Weaving that was poor quality could not be used and Gregory found himself in the position of asking unskilled weavers to try and improve. Some women who were content to weave ragged edges or leave broken yarns untied came to resent Kent's admonition and they quit in frustration. Those who continued learned that they were no longer weaving for themselves, but for someone else and according to someone else's idea of quality.

Gregory recognized that the situation was hard on people. He sympathized with them but he knew that in order to sell the work and get as good an income as possible for them, "they had to dance to someone else's music." It was a foreign idea and there were hard feelings but each of the women who had quit came back after several years and asked to weave again. Now, when people start weaving, they know the condition and the standard of work. Everybody knows and

tells one another what the work needs to be like; Gregory doesn't have to tell them. In a more recent example, at one of the new weaving instruction centers, several young weavers chew tobacco and sometimes drop the juices on the100% silk scarves they're weaving. Stains cannot be removed even by dry cleaning. After they were told once or twice that they would not be paid for that piece and, because silk is expensive, they would be deducted for the actual cost of the silk, the problem was solved.

How to transform traditional local craftwork into contemporary products for urban markets is a consistent theme in the emergence of successful artisan enterprises. In order to distinguish its' products from the many ethnic-inspired textiles for sale in Chiang Mai and the rest of Thailand, Sop Moei Arts has asked international textile and fashion consultants not only to come up with design ideas but also to teach the weavers how to look at their indigenous designs and reinterpret them for contemporary use. Significantly, their strategy has been to encourage the creativity of weavers to come up with modern interpretations of Pwo Karen patterns and products and also take inspiration from other Southeast Asian textiles.

There are differences in how the weavers respond to this call for innovation. And new kinds of experience help facilitate the process. To begin with, all the women who come to weave have basic weaving skills. The majority wants to be told what to do and follow clear instructions. They look on weaving as a job and secure income. They don't want to damage their weaving because they know they are being paid well for their work. When Gregory asks, "What do you think about your textile?" they don't know what to say. Other weavers are more outspoken and a few will say, "When I did it that way, I think it looked better." Several will take a risk and try something they want to do. Often, when Gregory is about to leave the village for a while, he purposefully tells the weavers it's up to them what they do. Some weavers appreciate this and later they discuss what makes this or that textile better. One of the first men who wove scarves for Sop Moei Arts is now in charge of a weaving instruction center because he is a good designer and does beautiful work. Colour selection is done collaboratively with Gregory, but colour arrangement and balance is left up to him.

It is important for weavers to know about what happens to the textiles--where they go and what's their purpose. When Sop Moei Arts exhibits their work at the Hilton Hotel in Bangkok, Gregory sometimes takes weavers with him. This is a new experience for them; they have an opportunity to learn what happens to their textiles and how other people live. Because they know more, they get ideas about what can be done with the textiles and baskets. For example, a basket maker who had been to Bangkok for exhibitions many times, created a new small basket that preserved all the details of a large dome-shaped basket that people use in the mountains as a trunk for storing blankets and clothing. Explaining his innovation, he said he made it because he had heard customers say, "I'd love to buy that basket, but I can't get it on the plane." Another time, he made a small basketry lamp based on a large one that Gregory had designed. He took about two months to pull the original apart and remake it in a smaller size because he learned that foreign houses have small bedside lamps.

*Making a Difference in the Sop Moei District*

In May 2000 there were 60 textile weavers, on average 22 years old, working for Sop Moei Arts in seven villages. Although weaving is traditionally a women's activity and men would never have considered using a backstrap loom, about 12 men are weaving on the large looms. And women are making baskets, traditionally the work of men. These changes are happening because of income earned through weaving activity. A woman working at the loom

makes 6000 Baht per month ($240 Canadian). Or she can earn up to 10,000 Baht if she wants to weave more. A man, hired to work on a farm, earns a maximum of 2000 Baht per month. Since women's income through weaving is much greater, men have begun to view weaving as an alternative kind of employment.

Sop Moei Arts now has three weaving instruction centers and a basketry workshop in widely separated villages. In villages where there is no weaving center, a structure has been built where three women can work together. Continually, more Karen ask to work in the weaving project. While at least 10 more looms could be put to use, Sop Moei Arts is cautious about taking on more people because they must be able to pay weavers right away upon completing their textiles, not five months later. And Sop Moei Arts is too small to afford to keep a large stock of unsold products. They need to match the market demand in order to sell things quickly in the shop and be able to pay the weavers well. However, recently six more weavers joined; their looms are built and they are ready to start weaving.

The income generated by artisans is having a significant impact on improving levels of health and education in the area. Artisans are paid 60% of the money from sales and their families benefit directly by having more money for food. 40% of Sop Moei Arts' income is allocated to a scholarship fund to help any Pwo Karen in the project area who needs financial assistance for education. This includes children who have to go to live in town to attend school beyond grade four or six, which is now available in many of the villages. It also includes students who attend high school and university, a significant accomplishment for villages where no one reads or writes. Increasing the possibility for continuing education outside their communities, Sop Moei Arts also hopes that students will return to assist the community development work in their villages. To this end, they ask university level students to come back and work as employees of Sop Moei Arts for a minimum of two years; otherwise their scholarships are considered as loans to be repaid over a period of time. Ultimately, the goal is for Sop Moei Arts to be operated entirely by people indigenous to the region.

## Conclusion

Although Adult Education as a field of practice, research, and theory is shifting boundaries and drawing on new perspectives, knowledge about diverse approaches to creating and sustaining communities is a theme that links the past and future of Adult Education. Given an environment of cultural and economic globalization, stories of community building, such as the one in this paper, among rural poor in Thailand have implications for future developments of Adult Education. A complexity of adult learning issues need to be examined in context, including, issues of organizing and innovating for the benefit of community enterprise development.

Traditional methods and forms of craft reflect millennia of cultural adaptation and change that occur at the interface between cultures, generations, and creative individuals. The current intersection of the needs of low-income artisans in rural areas and the desires of urban consumers, often in far away places, has instigated both the organization of grass roots community enterprises and a wide range of craft adaptation and innovation. Adult educators in Canada have significant roles to play in extending the boundary of care and concern to include distant places and people - an ethic of sustainability. As researchers and educators we can listen to and tell the stories and generate theory that reflects the diversity and complexity of responses among individuals and at the level of local communities to the impacts of globalization.

Lifelong learning in the context of rural Thailand centers on questions of survival and what needs to be learned in order for communities and environments to be sustainable. Community ownership of economic development is a vehicle for learning, simultaneously in local and global communities. In a process that starts with the hands of rural artisans in Asia and finishes when a craft item reaches the hands of distant consumers there are possibilities for increasing awareness of economic connectedness and social responsibility in the global marketplace. This is a fertile ground for adult learning.

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# Re-Membering and Re-Picturing Activist Mothers: The Canadian Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Audiovisual Rhetoric of "Home Protection"

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**Abstract:** My study of the audiovisual rhetoric of the Canadian Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) re-evaluates (*re-members*) mothers as activists and their use of symbols to reshape civil society in the areas of substance abuse, family violence, and social-economic-political justice for women. Memory work constitutes theoretical framework and research method.

My study, which re-members and re-pictures the activist mothers of the Canadian Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and their educational artistry, is inspired by Byatt's (1994) short story "Art Work." This story is an elaborate metaphor of what counts as art and creativity, and challenges the normative criteria of order and disorder in acknowledging art *as* art--and by extension, challenges the normative criteria of skills and technical-rationality in acknowledging adult education *as* adult education. Many of the contradictions and ironies of WCTU artwork are embodied in Byatt's characters. Debbie is too busy as editor of a women's magazine to pursue her own art work. She covers a story of an art exhibition and learns from the promotional brochure that Mrs. Brown, her housecleaner, is the artist Sheba Brown who "gets her materials from everywhere – skips, jumble sales, cast-offs, going through other people's rubbish, cleaning up after school f ? tes" (pp. 83-84). In my study, WCTU mothers as educators and activists get their materials from everywhere. Tisdell (2000) calls women adult educators to a *re-membering* of social change, by which she means "a reevaluation process of reworking and reshaping of. . .childhood symbols and traditions and reshaping them to be more relevant to an adult spirituality" (p. 317). This study is a *re-membering* of our mothers and foremothers as audiovisual educators and social change agents who "do everything" and get their symbols from everywhere.

The early WCTU was a larger social movement in absolute numbers than Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) today. Unlike MADD, the WCTU's "Do Everything" policy was manifested in their diverse Departments of Work. The well-known departments in the early 20th century relate to prohibition and women's suffrage. I grew up in a WCTU community and family in southern Ontario; my mother, grandmothers, and aunts were actively involved until well into the 1960s. As a child, I became intimately acquainted with the Departments of Work that related to the Little White Ribboners (mothers' pledge for infants), elocution medal contests for youth, and the quizzes for scientific temperance instruction in the public school system. In this paper, I shall illustrate WCTU activism and adult education assuming audiovisual forms. Spinosa, Flores, and Dreyfus (1999) call the transformative kind of speaking that manifests in

[1]The graphics and list of references that support this research article are available on Dorothy Lander's homepage: http://www.stfx.ca/people/dlander

groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) [and by extension the WCTU] "*interpretive* and not *persuasive*. . . . It allows some practice, thing, or identity to appear as worthy of consideration by a mixed community. . . composed of a wider range of interests than those of a group of professionals or technicians" (p. 99). Spinosa et al. claim interpretive speaking as the highest form of political discourse. "It forces the speakers to: (1) remain true to the concrete experiences of their subworlds, (2) acknowledge and respect the different experiences in other subworlds, and (3) seek opportunities for cross-appropriating practices from other subworlds" (p. 99).

Although the WCTU is diminished in size from its peak numbers of more than 10,000 at the turn of the 20th century, its continuing work of agitating for abstinence is activism constituted explicitly out of mothers' concern for their children. Elizabeth (Betty) Wolfe, age 69, the current Canadian WCTU president, echoes the "Do Everything" conviction for today's membership of less than 300. Her interpretive speaking remains true to concrete experience and seeks opportunities for cross-appropriating to the subworld of information technology: "It isn't just alcohol and drugs and cigarettes. It's pornography, and especially on the Internet now. All of this is available to them (children) and it's a concern. I don't know if we'll ever overcome the problem of alcohol, but we can work toward it" (Landon, 2000, p. F2). My 90-year old mother numbers among the membership of 300 and continues to read *The Canadian White Ribbon Tidings* faithfully. The white ribbon is the WCTU's predominant visual image of the homeplace and stands for purity, patriotism, and peace and is tied to the political and religious slogan of "home protection." My earliest temperance artifact (1947) also centers on the white ribbon. My mother pledges on my Little White Ribboner's Certificate that she "will not give or allow [me] to take Intoxicating Drinks." The bold statements on this certificate make the verbal-visual connection between the white ribbon and homeplaces: "Nations are gathered out of Nurseries. The Hope of the Race is the Child."

I have begun to develop an oral history of the WCTU experience with my brothers, sister, cousins, friends, and neighbours. As I read and re-read the transcripts, I am struck by our vivid sensory recollections of our temperance foremothers' appeal to the audiovisual in the "work" (see Lander, 2000a, b). Serendipitously, the political and religious banners of the WCTU between 1877 and 1932 (Harker & Allen, 1999) were being exhibited at the Museum of Textiles in Toronto in the summer of 1999 just as I was beginning my oral history of the WCTU.

**Homeplace Women as Audiovisual Educators**

The confluence of word and image in our mothers' temperance activism became a common theme of my oral history and of the exhibit of WCTU banners. The WCTU qualifies as a "public homeplace" in Belenky's (1996) sense of organizations that emphasize the values and images associated with mother-work, home, and domesticity in public life; public homeplaces are organized around metaphors and rhetoric of care, concern, and connection. "On the deepest level, the homeplace women think of all human beings as belonging to a single family" (p. 410). Gouthro's (2000) secular conception of global civil society echoes the slogan of the WCTU "For God and Home and Every Land," which was adopted in the early twentieth century. "The common, global concerns that women and men also may share, in wanting their families to be safe, their homes free of violence, their children to have hope, resources, and opportunities for the future" (Gouthro, p. 69).

My study de-romanticizes the audiovisual symbols of WCTU mothers and homeplace women. I explicate the patriarchal bias in the WCTU's rhetoric of domination that depends on persuasion and a conscious intent to change others, to eliminate male vice, and thus, to dominate others (Foss & Griffin, 1992, p. 335). Letitia Youmans was the first president of the Dominion WCTU (later the Canadian WCTU) and the rhetoric of domination over male vice pours forth in Youmans' (1893) autobiography but so too does the invitational rhetoric of inherent value in the context of interconnection (Foss & Griffin, 1995). "At the request of [her] sisters in the work, [Youmans]. . .recalls the story of her life" (p. v):

> The term prohibition, when applied to the liquor traffic, was obnoxious, so much so that I would announce my subject as "home protection," assuring my audience that I had not come to advocate woman's rights, but to remonstrate against woman's wrongs; to claim for every wife the right to have a sober husband, and every mother to have a sober son, and a comfortable home for herself and children. (p. 207)

Belenky's (1996) romantic image of homeplace women eschews the masculinist metaphors of war. She also avoids explicitly attaching the metaphors of advocacy and activism to homeplace women. "The metaphors, verbs, and adjectives the homeplace women actually use. . .almost always suggest activities that foster growth, development, and connection" (p. 411). My study of WCTU audiovisual education provides exemplars of the contradictory rhetoric that WCTU mothers use; war and advocacy metaphors co-exist with metaphors of home and hearth. This is interpretive speaking that seeks opportunities for cross-appropriating practices from the subworld of war and the military. Frances Willard (1893), who was Letitia Youmans' contemporary with the American WCTU, addressed the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1893 beginning "Beloved Comrades of the White Ribbon Army." In 1999, six WCTU mothers of my mother's generation, including my mother, responded with applause to a WCTU mother who recited from heart her winning poem from the 1940s, "There are Two Armies," but also with deep sighs that indicated that alcohol as "the foe" was still a viable metaphor.

I can trace the strong audiovisual elements that attended the 1999 oral history among my generation and the process of negotiating our way from remembering our temperance foremothers as out-of-touch old women to remembering their work as feminist education and activism. Our visual touchstone was of older women drinking tea together in the parlour. The WCTU fostered this image themselves, judging from the October 1967 cover of *The Canadian White Ribbon Tidings*. Cook (1997) provides some balance for this stereotypical image of the WCTU "as a group of aging women rather irrelevantly railing against mainstream and its mores" (p. 656). Note the "fight" metaphor in Cook's description of homeplace women as activists:

> This inaccurate and demeaning interpretation trivializes the historical significance of the WCTU and the many causes it fought. . . .The WCTU white ribbon campaign has in the 1990's been appropriated by men as a public symbol condemning male violence against women – an ironic, but not unwelcome, gesture to those who remember the original meaning of the white ribbon: personal purity for women who would in turn purify and reshape their society. (pp. 656-657)

The WCTU encouraged its members to wear their white ribbon badge as a symbol of membership and all the WCTU stood for. They also encouraged WCTU to dress for public occasions in a way that did not masculinize them (Mattingly, 1998, p. 66).

Audiovisual rhetoric as memory work (see Rider, 1990) enables the exchange of ideas across generations. I can trace new understanding and insights that emerged in the process of remembering our WCTU mothers' symbols. I shall also explicate the invitational rhetoric that emerges in the audience responses to the WCTU banners in the Museum of Textiles guest book. The WCTU banners were displayed in the Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec in 2000 and advance stories in *The Ottawa Citizen* constituted invitational rhetoric. Here Landon (2000) underscores the confluence of word and image in the rhetoric of homeplace women by featuring three colour reproductions of the banners and repeating the slogan of an 1888 banner in the headline: "For God and Home and Native Land." This invokes Shlain's (1998) plans of action that combine the focused, step-by-step "masculine" logic of the left brain and the holistic, "feminine" logic of the right brain. De Vries (1999) also describes the banners in *The Anglican Journal*: "The starkness of these words is softened through elaborate needlework of flowers and curlicues interwoven with letters. . . .The visual design elements add another level of meaning....White and yellow colours predominate, symbolizing purity and the suffragette movement respectively" (p. 17).

The 1890 "Workers for God" WCTU banner is reproduced on the front cover of the catalogue, *Gather Beneath the Banner*, for the Museum of Textiles (Harker & Allen, 1999). I represent it here as an exemplar of homeplace women and of contradictory feminist visual rhetoric. The rhetoric of domination over male vice is exemplified by the sword in the mother's hand ready to strike the serpent in the grass. Contradictorily, the violent metaphor of the sword holds true to Belenky's (1996) metaphors that homeplace women use, such as "nurturing" and "caring." The rhetoric of inherent value and the value of home protection is exemplified in the mother's hand shielding her child from danger. Shlain (1998) develops his thesis that the divisions between right and left brain accord with the primary perceptual modes of women and men. "The left hand controlled by the right brain, is more protective than the right....Shielding, holding, and toting are maternal functions necessitated by the helplessness of human infants....The dominant right hand is the agent of action. It throws the spear....These two mirror-image strategies, gather/nurture and hunt/kill, are combined in each of us" (pp. 26-27). This banner exemplifies the visual rhetoric of mothering, particularly the "dual aspect" activity of childrearing that Fraser (1989) elaborates in order to include both symbolic and material reproduction. The rhetoric of domination inheres in a modernist capitalist organization that would separate childrearing practices as symbolic reproduction practices from the material reproduction practices of producing food and objects (Fraser, p. 115). The visual rhetoric of the Workers for God banner addresses audience and spectators on the complexities of childrearing practices.

### Re-membering and Re-picturing White Ribbon Rhetoric

The verbal rhetoric of the white ribbon takes up Hart's (1997) valuing of motherwork and the mothers-as-activists challenge to the market-oriented orientation to production as profit that thrives on divisions and separations. Compare this to the rhetoric of inherent value in the context

of interaction: "the wearer of the white ribbon badge prays daily for the welfare of all mankind" (*The Canadian White Ribbon Tidings*, May 1962). In taking up Hart's challenge, I analyse the audiovisual rhetoric in my 1999 oral history of the WCTU and the responses to the WCTU banners in the Museum of Textiles guest book. The artifacts highlight the contradictions of feminist rhetoric and the engagement of both inherent value and domination.

Ironically, memory is perhaps the least remembered of the five Aristotelian canons of rhetoric that also include style, arrangement, delivery, and invention. Following Rider (1990), I propose to bring back memory to the canons of rhetoric and redefine memory in the context of the feminist rhetoric of my oral history and the banner exhibition. Neuroscientists and cognitive linguists lend support to using the visual and the verbal to reinforce one another in lifelong learning. Meaning making forges the link between learning and memory (see Heath, 2000). Feminist rhetoric depends on the linking of metaphor to memory. Metaphor is an image and it does not matter if it is a speech or a poem or woman's dress or a WCTU banner. "It's still a stirring of the memory and it's letting two memories – both speaker and listener, reader and writer, [artist and spectator] – share for a minute" (Rider, p. 7). Metaphor connects to activism as a "phenomenon of use. . .an interactive phenomenon, in the sense that it is an utterance which a speaker [and an artist] intends his hearer [and spectator] to amplify and adjust" (Haack, 1998, p. 77). Nasstrom's (1999) analysis of memory work and women's activism in the context of the civil rights movement in Georgia validates my analysis of the oral history with my WCTU family, friends and neighbours, which began in the summer of 1999. Our collective memories of the past legitimate action in the present. We "become historical actors who intervene between the past and the present, continually reframing the movement" (p. 134). I begin with the WCTU banners as exemplars of stirring of memory and the amplifying and adjusting of metaphors.

The rhetoric of inherent value in the context of interaction embodies this woman's response to the banner exhibition. Note how she amplifies and adjusts the metaphors of the banners with her own visual image of "cold, cold water."

> I didn't know the White Ribbon had been used previously to Montreal Massacre Remembrance. This exhibition is an example of what women do best in getting their message across, collaboration, creativity and network organization – excellent exhibit. "Cold, Cold Water is the Drink for Me!"

Listen to this woman as spectator and historical actor who intervenes between the past and the present – "then" and "today" - in her longing to connect to the art work: "Difficulty in keeping my eyes and hands off. The intricate work of needle, art, paint & message is presented then yet is still today an issue in many ways. Thank you."

This next spectator becomes a "spect-actor" in Boal's (1992) Invisible Theatre where active spectators unknowingly are both audience and actors. The WCTU artwork becomes "the *agent provocateur*. . .mingling with the public. . .using theatre to stimulate debate, getting people to question issues in a pubic forum" (pp. xx-xxi). In the process, the spect-actors change the script. "So glad these banners have been "found" and brought to the light of day! Has the W.C.T.U. ever considered amalgamation with M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)? Strength in numbers!" The WCTU banners legitimate action at a personal level for this next spect-actor's own family. Her response redefines memory work as rhetoric that carries the past

forward to the present and an imagining of a different future: "A moving exhibit – the passion these women had are felt through their works still. This exhibit has inspired me to create my own banner for my family, with the beliefs we hold to be important. Thank you for the life changing collection."

Not all spectators amplified and adjusted the visual metaphors in such glowing phrases. This spectator responds to the WCTU's patriarchal bias and their rhetoric of domination. His closing remark is telling of a response at a bodily level: "Thanks for letting me get that off my chest."

> To think how strong the church and state are that they have the power to influence our morals, our sense of what is right and wrong. Too bad these temperance ladies fell into the trap of believing that they were the pious ones and that their moralistic values and gender would keep everyone in line (their children and husbands). Instead it subordinated their positions and made them repressed.

The responses to the visual rhetoric of the WCTU banners gives me pause as I re-read the transcripts of my oral history in my home community. A 50-year-old dairy farmer's total recall of his temperance elocution poem from some 35 years earlier supports Rider's (1990) claim that feminist rhetoric depends on memory. I present his *re-membering* in support of my hunch that the visual rhetoric that the WCTU favours acts as a retrieval cue in the selectivity of memory. The dairy farmer clearly remembered his mother's work (and images) in helping him prepare for his recitation, a tragic saga of drinking and driving: "Mother being inventive as she was, she got a Spic and Span can and we put a set of Meccano wheels on it....And I can remember holding up this thing, it was to represent a car, it was an old tin can." Like Byatt's (1994) Mrs. Brown, whose artwork teemed with vitality, this WCTU mother and audiovisual educator "gets her materials from everywhere"--the kitchen and the toy closet. The canon of visual rhetoric that the dairy farmer validates is invention: "Mother being inventive as she was. . ." Initially he does not validate memory in the canon of feminist rhetoric and its link to women's activism (see Nasstrom, 1999). Rather he remembers the WCTU's rhetoric of domination:

> I don't remember much of an education program involved in the speaking that we did....I just remember yeah, being pushed into these, everybody did it and that was sort of it....I don't ever remember, you know, anything going along with those to sort of say, "Well, this is why you should be doing those little speeches" or "This is why we advocate..." I don't remember that.

The response from my sister June (age 58), a mother herself, supports my theorizing on memory work as a negotiation of a shared past to create a her-story of the present: "Well, maybe it was better without a long sermon because those speeches had all the message right in them."

I have a hunch that activist mothers' use of contradictory rhetoric is necessary to support motherwork and the "dual activity" of childrearing for civil society, which "comprises language teaching and initiation into social mores – but also feeding, bathing, and protection from physical harm" (Fraser, 1989, p. 116). I close this paper by *inviting* you to engage with the values implicit in my re-membering of my own mother's work, the "home protection" of temperance activism. I

hope to *persuade* you that WCTU mothers as activists in civil society de-naturalize the ascendancy of production of profit over production for life (Hart, 1992). I re-member my mother's use of audiovisual rhetoric to accompany my brother David's recitation of "The Cider Mill." I can remember only the last line of this poem, which was "This is the best way to make cider!" at which point David bit into an apple with gusto. My mother insisted it must be a well-polished red MacIntosh for the visual effect and even more for its juicy sound effects. As you can see and hear and taste, mothers as audiovisual educators and activists get their symbols from everywhere.

# Spirituality as a Sustaining Dimension of the Transformational Learning Process: Surviving Psychological Wife Abuse.

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research was to explore the transformational learning process through which women go in naming and disclosing psychological abuse in their intimate relationship. This empirical study documented a spiritual[i] component as a critical part of the transformational learning process of these women.

## Introduction

I came to this research with a need to put words to my own experiences. Adult learning and the transformational and developmental theories of Mezirow (1978, 1991) and Kegan (1982, 1994) provided the grounding that allowed me to connect adult learning theories to everyday life situations. However, I had the need to find the "feeling" part of learning that I felt was missing from these theories. This need was satisfied through further research which uncovered the grieving process as outlined by Boyd & Myers (1988). With this knowledge and several years of critical reflection and soul searching, I recongized the transformational learning process through which I had gone personally, as I identified psychological wife abuse as a topic I needed to research. Through this research I was seeking confirmation of my own decisions, personal process and time frames.

The world of women living with psychological abuse is filled with contradiction and ambiguity, the reality of life denying all that we know and believe. It is within this world that we must recognize and name the psychological abuse within our relationship before we can begin to make sense of our experiences. Compounding the difficulties of naming an invisible, often subtle, yet very real oppression, are the multitude of opinions and reactions[ii] encountered from family, friends and health professionals. We must also reconcile the confusion over what we believe to be true from our socialization and upbringing and the reality of our abusive relationship. In order to make meaning from our experiences with psychological abuse it is necessary to take a critical look at one of our most treasured relationships while re-visioning and recreating ourselves as women. The healing process dictates that we question ambiguous and contradictory structures that stand in the way of personal and communal development, "leaving behind the old perspective permanently..." (Lauzon, 1997, p.34).

## Conceptual Framework

From a humanist and constructivist perspective, this research assumes that humans have an innate ability to reorganize and restructure their experiences and in doing so, gain a new outlook. Although past research (Walker, 1979) has portrayed women living with abuse as victims, Gondolf (1988) proposed a theory of abused women as survivors[iii]. He has suggested that "even in the midst of severe psychological [trauma]...women seek help, adapt and push on" (Gondolf, 1988, p. 20).

From this perspective, transformational learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1991) provided the conceptual framework through which to study the learning process of women as they created meaning from their experiences with psychological wife abuse. In particular, the healing process of transformative learning as outlined by Boyd & Myers (1988) was thought to most closely demonstrate the intellectual and emotional journey of women as they named and disclosed their psychologically abusive relationship. In the remainder of this paper I will briefly review the methodology of the research, provide an overview of the findings and conclude with implications for adult education.

## Methodology

Using a constructivist, feminist methodology, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted. This provided the forum within which nine, self-identified participants[iv] were able to reflect on their experiences and describe turning points in their lives. Using an interpretative, biographical process (Denzin, 1989), the experiences of the participants were recorded as stories. The data were then analyzed using a constant comparative method, stories option, (Kirby & McKenna, 1989) which maintained the integrity of the women's experiences and highlighted content and process.

This research was designed to explore the learning process of women living in psychologically abusive relationships in rural communities[v]. Interviews were conducted in the homes of participants, allowing them the privacy to explore experiences that were meaningful to them personally. I anticipated that the transformational learning models of Mezirow (1978, 1991) and Boyd & Myers (1988) would be sufficient to document the learning process that would result.

## Findings

This research supported the thesis that the naming and disclosing of psychological wife abuse follows a two phase intellectual and emotional process of transformational learning, one that closely resembles the process outlined by Mezirow (1978, 1991) and Boyd & Myers (1988). It further identified a strong spiritual component which was a stabilizing force as the participants named their abuse and developed coping strategies. The overarching issue for women living with psychological abuse was survival. For these women the intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth cannot be fully understood in isolation. In Figure 1, I have attempted to demonstrate the interplay of the intellectual and emotional transformation and the sustaining power of their spirituality. However, this graphic does not do justice to the iterative, messy process of transformational learning.

For ease of explanation I will use the story of one of the research participants to illustrate the findings of this study: Kelly[vi] was married for 17 years to her abusive partner and lived in a secluded rural hamlet during that time. During the early years Kelly described her relationship as "really great...I was bending over backwards...I thought if I just [did] everything exactly right then [I'd] have a happy marriage". However, her family constantly teased her that she was really "under her husband's thumb". She resisted their comments, "I didn't want to hear there were problems...he's a nice guy, ...I [kept] forgetting and forgetting".

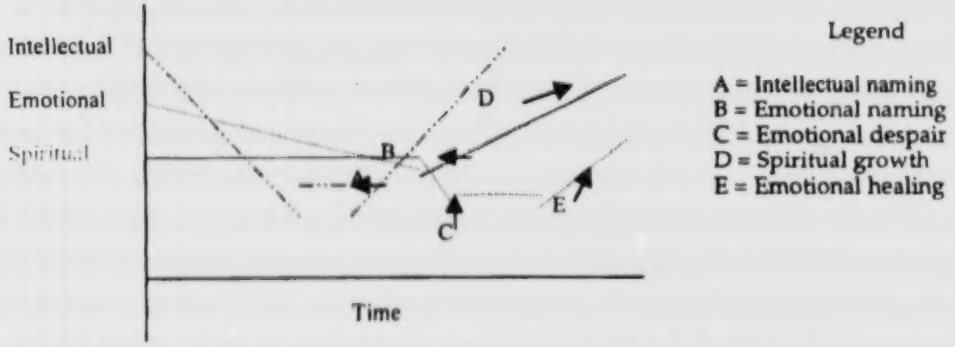


Figure 1. Demonstrates the intellectual, emotional and spiritual interaction as identified in this research.

During the first ten years Kelly and her husband had four children and built a new house together. However, she remembers that her partner continually threw roadblocks at her as she questioned his commitment to her and their family. Kelly tells us "I couldn't talk to him... he was very dominating, I started seeing patterns... I'd always have that particular feeling... I would feel so low... when I got really depressed I'd [write]". Keeping a personal journal allowed Kelly to better understand herself and to recognize abusive patterns in her partners behaviour. Even so, her intellectual confidence and sense of self began to erode to the point where she was no longer sure of what was fact and what was fiction. Labeling the relationship as abusive was a turning point for Kelly. She says:

> There was an actual moment, an actual instant... I remember phoning my sister... and I was crying... I couldn't really tell her why... but she... said to me "you are in an abusive relationship" that's all she said... you know she could have said that to me the day before and it wouldn't have meant anything to me... but all of a sudden it was— yes... I had this burden lifted off me...

After naming her relationship as abusive (point 'A', figure 1), she "didn't think it was the end of the relationship, [she] thought, now I know how to help him...I know what I have to do". As indicated in figure 1, she found new intellectual energy to move forward.

Kelly agreed with most participants that during this time weeks turned into months and then to years. The time frame between the intellectual and emotional naming of the psychological abuse varied with each of the participants. While continuing to seek help for herself and her partner, Kelly's sister suggested she read "No Visible Wounds"[vii]. "I just cried and cried because it was so real...I read some chapters twice...I said this is how it was in my life...and gave that to him (her partner)...he said the whole thing was a lie, and it was hard...it was really hard". The emotional recognition of psychological abuse ('B' in figure 1) was the most devastating, leading to further emotional decline. However, it was also at this point that she began her search for meaning through her religious beliefs and spirituality. Kelly felt she needed

the support of her church and sought out her pastor for advice. He was less than supportive, telling her that it always takes two when there are problems in a marriage.

> I believed him, I believed him and thought... I've done something wrong... terribly wrong... I just sunk so deep... after he told me that...

Kelly's emotional health hit bottom (point 'C' in figure 1) after this interchange with her pastor. Through journaling and continuing to seek support from those around her, Kelly began to recognize the rigidity displayed by her pastor. She grappled with the contradictions of her traditional religious background and the reality of life with her abusive partner.

> Certain doctrines... are set in stone... and some people hold to that but there are a lot of Christians who say... it's the person that matters more than the doctrines... the people who understand my situation are the people who really seem to understand what God can do in hearts

Kelly maintains that information and the development of a more personal relationship with her God has helped her to cope with the psychological abuse with which she had been living. And, she has been able to separate her early, rigid religious beliefs from her evolving spirituality (process towards D). This has allowed her to move on intellectually and emotionally as well. Kelly is one of the lucky ones. Her spirituality sustained her through the intellectual and emotional turmoil of psychological abuse. As indicated at point 'E' of figure 1, the upward line indicates Kelly's optimism and her emotional healing which was sustained by her ongoing spiritual growth (D). She is able, once again to move on with her life.

Others were not as lucky. After many years Betty, Rita, Barbara and Joanne continue to struggle on a daily basis with depression and emotional trauma. However, they agree that it is their spirituality that sustains them. Joanne concludes "I find it hard not to isolate myself... [yet] I am very optimistic... in my heart...I am an optimist... I believe life can be better, I believe I can make a change... if I only had the strength".

## Conclusions and Implications for Adult Learning

The findings of this research describe a process through which women living with psychological abuse named their relationship as abusive, disclosed the abuse to others, and developed very personal coping strategies to sustain their everyday living. But, more importantly, the woman articulated a sense of movement and growth. Their spirituality moderated their emotional turmoil while the women made intellectual sense of their experiences. Even those who continue to struggle emotionally have identified a spiritual path that has undergirded the painful ups and downs of their personal experiences with abuse. They are not the same women today that they were when they first entered into their abusive relationships. These findings set the stage for further study of spirituality and its relationship to adult transformational learning in this and other contexts. This research further suggests that to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of adult learning, research must be extended out of the classroom to real life settings.

Scott (1997, p. 49) tells us that "[a]t the entrance to the twenty-first century, a door is waiting for us to open as we gather as individuating souls to act in new ways". This challenges adult educators to continue to develop innovative and supportive learning environments that question ambiguity and contradiction while engaging "[t]he wholeness of learners' lives—not just their heads..." (Dirkx, 1997, p. 82). By providing learning environments that support opportunities for personal growth and development, the academic community—adult educators and students together—carry new ways of knowing and understanding into their personal lives, their relationships and their communities, opening the door to new ways of being.

## Endnotes

[i] Tom Harpur (1996, p. 136) defines spirituality as "the inner life or spirit of each of us as it relates to the unseen world of Spirit or of God. It's the name we give to the dimension of seeing and living that goes far beyond the material world to deeper truths and eternal values". He goes on to describe a larger, "cosmic consciousness" that will be necessary for the new millennium. This extends to a very personal spirituality which includes not only a belief in a higher power but the people and universe around us.

[ii] These responses can range from support to condemnation to "why don't you just leave", usually without consideration for the emotional and very practical aspects of the situation.

[iii] Gondolf (1988) research suggests that "battered women increase their help-seeking in the face of increased violence,... Their effort to survive transcends even fearsome danger, depression or guilt, and economic constraints... In this effort to survive, battered women are, in fact, heroically assertive and persistent" (p. 17-18). "An inner strength, yearn for dignity, desire for good, or will to live appears despite one's... present circumstances...by receiving proper supports, one's inner strength can be realized, resiliency demonstrated, and a new life made" (Gondolf, 1988, p. 20).

[iv] Participants ranged in aged from mid-thirties to over sixty years old at the time of the interviews. Four women had lived in abusive relationships for approximately 6 years, three from 14-17 years and two had lived with abusive partners for over thirty five years. Seven of the women had 2 or 3 children, one had 4 children and one had eight children.

[v] Rural living provided additional challenges in the naming of psychological abuse due to issues of confidentiality, isolation, lack of access to information and specialized services and ideological factors. Women living in rural areas may stay in abusive relationships five to eight years longer then their urban counterparts (McLaughlin & Church (1992). Rural communities tend to be more conservative, resistant to change, stress family privacy and value traditional male/female roles and patriarchal values (McCallum, 1999).

[vi] For purposes of confidentiality names of participants have been changed. All quotes are from McCallum, 1999.

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# The Impact of Globalization on Human Rights: The Challenge for Adult Educators

Derek Mulenga

**Abstract:** This paper examines the impacts of globalization on human rights and the challenges faced by adult educators. It concludes that globalization has adversely affected human rights, particularly in the South. Adult educators must challenge the discourse of accepting globalization as an inevitable product of development.

This paper examines the impacts of globalization on human rights and the challenges faced by adult educators. The paper has three sections. The first section explains the origins and nature concept of globalization and its impact on peace and stability in diverse societies, particularly in the South. The second section explores the relationship between globalization, development and human rights. The analysis focuses on the impact and implications of a neoliberal, market-driven development paradigm on human rights. The third and final section explores the roles of adult education in promoting and educating human rights in order to create a peaceful society, particularly within the context of resurgence of "democracy" in the South.

*What is Globalization?*

Although there are several theories of globalization, at the moment, two schools with opposite positions can be identified: the romantics and pessimists. According to the romantics, key features in the global economy including increased levels of economic and financial integration, interdependence, and openness of national economies characterize globalization. The main carrier of economic globalization is the global corporate firm. The romantics point out that this process has gone so far that nation states have lost most of the power they used to have. Instead, they predict the emergence of supra-national entities that are both borderless and powerful. The romantics are ideologically linked a neoliberal view of economics and business. A good example of their arguments can be found in the works of Kenichi Ohmae, like *The Borderless World* and *The End of the National State*.

I would like to suggest that both the views of romantics and those of the pessimists are wrong. It seems to me that an adequate understanding of this phenomenon must differ from each of them. First of all, I would argue that — contrary to the narrow view of romantics — globalization is not just about the deepening of financial markets, but a complex and multidimensional process that embraces a whole range of social, political, economic, and cultural phenomena as well. Simon Marginson's (1999) broad conceptualization of globalization best captures this position. He argues that there are six aspects of globalization: finance and trade, communications and information technologies, international movements of peoples, the formation of global societies, linguistic, cultural and ideological convergence, and world system of signs and images.

What is the driving force of globalization? The consensus is that the radical development of new information and communications technologies (ICTs) has played a critical role in driving the process of globalization. While technology certainly plays a key role in this process, I concur

with Sachs (1999) that the most fundamental factor underpinning globalization is policy change rather than technological change. What we are observing is a deliberate policy change from decades of state-led economic growth policies and in some extreme cases, autarkic socialist development strategies that prevailed in much of the Third World towards policies of radical economic liberalization and global integration. Similarly, the new technologies are not being developed coincidentally at this particular period in history. In fact, they are the result of deliberate policies that have resulted in significant increases in investment in research and development of new information and communications technologies and in the sciences that support them.

Marginson (1999) concludes that when this heterogeneity of globalization is recognized, its partial nature also becomes more apparent. In fact, I think that we are at the beginning of the process of globalization, not at the end. We are at the beginning of a fundamental change of the world. This change, as Marginson (1999) correctly points out, comes from numerous sources, not from a single source. We are at the beginning of this process and we do not really know as yet where it is going to lead us. I think Martin Albrow's recent book, *The Global Age*, provides the best way to conceptualize where we are. He says we are the beginning of a global era — not a post-modern age.

Second, contrary to the pessimists, I would say that globalization is the most fundamental set of changes going on in the world today. It has not advanced as far as the romantics say, and it is not purely driven by economic market imperatives, but it is still the most fundamental phenomenon of our times. Perhaps Anthony Giddens' notion that globalization is the shrinking of the world to a 'global village' through a virtual *annihilation of space through time* provides its broadest description (Giddens, 1990, p.64). In this sense, globalization has to do with the increasing inter-penetration between individual life and global futures, something that I think is relatively new in history. It is as much about the self — changes in our personal lives and certainly changes in local arenas — as it is about global systems. Globalization is also, in many respects, a contradictory process that produces rapid economic growth and wealth in some places and inequality, poverty, and social exclusion in others (Castells, 1998). It is not just about social fragmentation but also about the creation of new forms of unity.

Third, and certainly contrary to globalization pessimists, the current phase of globalization is not just an extension of earlier phases of Western capitalist expansion. I do not dispute the argument that globalization as a process has been going on for a long time, and that it has largely benefited the industrialized countries of the West (Mosa, nd). However, the *current* phase of globalization as a *deepening phenomenon* really began only about 35 years ago, when the first global communication system was established. This created new economic mechanisms, such as 24-hour global money markets, that affect so much of our lives. But with instantaneous global communication, the very texture of social life is also altered. When we live in a world where media images are conveyed across the planet, this changes who we are and how we live.

Although the contemporary processes of globalization are much more decentered than in the past, it is important to emphasize that globalization represents not only a reaffirmation of global capitalism but also an imposition of the neoclassical worldview of development and governance. The economic governance of the world is virtually in the hands of the "Washington Consensus" consisting mainly of the G-7 countries, the International Monetary Fund, the World

Bank, the G-Thirty and the World Economic Forum. The political management of the world is done by the G-7 through the United Nations and the other global structures, networks and fora.

*Definition and Main Approaches to Human Rights*

Human rights are based on respect for the dignity and worth of all human beings and seek to ensure freedom from fear and want. Rooted in ethical principles (and usually inscribed in a country's constitutional and legal framework), human rights are essential to the well being of every man, woman and child. Premised on fundamental and inviolable standards, they are universal and inalienable.

How are human rights defined? The traditional view limits them to civil and political rights in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nation, 1948. Included among these are the right to life, liberty and security; the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, language, religion, social class or political opinion; the right to vote, freedom of speech and freedom of press; the right to be free from arbitrary invasion of privacy, family or home; and legal rights such as the right to due process of law and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty.

Over past 50 years, this traditional view of human rights has been challenged. Some say that it is too limited in scope and that a more multidimensional and holistic approach must be taken. Consequently, through various instruments, charters and declarations, the basic civil and political rights have been expanded to include crucial social, economic and cultural rights. These include: the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to education; the right to work and to equal pay for equal work; and the right of minorities to enjoy their own culture, religion and language. Of particular importance to this view is the protection and advancement of the rights of disadvantaged and minority groups (such as women, children and indigenous peoples). The United Nations has adopted this holistic approach in determining what human rights are, and the international community has repeatedly affirmed the interdependence of both sets of rights.

Generally, there have been two main approaches of ensuring the realization of human rights. The first one, the "violations approach," involves human rights being closely monitored to publicize abuses and hold states accountable for upholding the law and implementing their international human rights commitments. A second approach emphasizes a comprehensive view of human rights, stressing both the protection and promotion of both *natural* and human rights. Thus, while securing the rule and enforcement of the law is crucial, so too is adopting measures that enable people to exercise their rights under the law. For example, promoting women's rights means not only changing and enforcing legal codes on gender equality and property rights, but also increasing women's access to paralegal services, local land, property title registration services, and equal employment opportunity.

*Globalization, Development and Human Rights*

The relation between globalization, development and human rights raises several questions. One key question is how we perceive the concept of development and human rights, especially in the context of South.

Development is also often used in a normative sense as a multi-valued social goal covering such diverse spheres as better material well-being, living standards, education, health care, wider opportunities for work and leisure, and in essence the whole gamut of desirable

social and material welfare (Esteva, 1992). The 1986 *Declaration of the Right to Development* and the 1990 *UN Global Consultation on the Right to Development as a Human Right* state that the right to development is an inalienable human right with the human being as the central subject to the right and that all the aspects of the right to development set forth in the *Declaration of the Right to Development* are indivisible and interdependent. A development paradigm that disregards or interferes with human rights is the very negation of development. The rest of this section briefly discusses the market-oriented development paradigm because it is the engine driving globalization.

*The market-oriented development paradigm*

The market-oriented development paradigm promoted by the "Washington Consensus" is based on the market and its logic. The basic principle is profit making through competitive pricing. This leads to the exploitation of labor and continuous technological innovation that makes labor or human beings redundant. Exclusion becomes an inevitable part of progress. Expansion and exclusion happen in the same breath under this regime. Resource power rules over labor power in this culture of development. We have seen how, thanks to globalization, a few TNCs control and manage the resources of the world to make profit. Technology is monopolized and manipulated for the military (production of military hardware is the most lucrative business) or production-of consumer goods for the rich. Plenty, economic growth and poverty co-exist and is being legitimized.

Global integration of the economic, political and sociocultural structures, processes, and ideologies produce injustice, oppression, exploitation and maldevelopment in society. The systematic integration of the forces that are dominant in the globalization process intensifies human rights violations. Globalization intensifies impoverishment by increasing the poverty, insecurity, and fragmentation of society and thus violates human rights and human dignity of millions of people.

Human rights have become an integral part of the process of globalization in many ways. The Western countries are increasingly using their view of human rights concept as a yardstick to judge developing countries and to deal with economic and trade relations to extend development assistance.

*Development aid and trade*

Development aid raises several issues related to human rights. First, aid raises the question whether aid should be directed mainly to reducing poverty and providing social services to the needy or whether priority should be given to economic growth and strengthening infrastructure. Second, there is a question whether the recipient government or the donor state should have a decisive voice. The developing states emphasize their primary responsibility for development of the country and their right to self-determination in respect of the economy and resources. Donor countries tend to emphasize their narrow concepts of human rights as a prerequisite to sanction development assistance. They also emphasize the pragmatic political fact that aid is not likely to be provided if the beneficiary states violated basic human rights. Thus, human rights have become another arsenal of Western countries in their bid to bring recalcitrant Third World nations to heel in their New World Order. Human rights terminology has often been used to justify decisions to provide aid or to terminate it; while human rights criteria - to the extent that

there is such a thing in the aid policy of any donor - have been confined to the search for those human rights violations that could justify cutting off aid (Tomasevski, 1997).

Liberalization of global trade is a key feature of globalization. Through the WTO and similar organizations, a set of new rules and regulations has been instituted to promote the formation of regional economic trading blocs. At the same time several Western countries have been trying to interrelate trade policy with human rights policy. Under mounting pressure from the business lobby in the irrespective countries, several Western governments have altered their policies depending up on their business interests. Under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) that provides for trade benefits for developing countries, the USA has withdrawn or threatened to withdraw preferences from some countries that violate human rights. The case of USA-China trade relations is good example. This is a case of shift in policy based on convenience rather than on ideological convictions or moral principles.

On the other hand, some developed countries are pressing for trade sanctions against states found to violate human rights, especially human rights standards that are generally based on the Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organization. They have tended on the whole to oppose trade liberalization treaties such as NAFTA and currently WTO. The developing countries have generally objected to such measures since they would reduce their comparative advantage through cheap labor and constitute a major barrier to their industrialization. From their point of view, workers rights enforced by trade barriers would contribute to greater poverty in their countries.

Although the *Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises* adopted by the Organization of Economically Developed Countries (1976) provided for observance of standards of labor relations with respect to human rights by transnational companies, the USA and a few other countries have prevented its adoption. These are some of the examples of the double standards adopted by the developed countries that profess concern for human rights. The fact is that the economically-powerful Western countries are in a better position than others to take the advantage of globalization and at the same item dictate policies and guidelines to increase their bargaining power.

TNCs (and associated multilateral agencies and think-tanks) have become very powerful players under globalization. They are the main actors in several Western countries (and the South) in formulating new foreign policies to shape a new global order. This trend has been highlighted in a recent study that the emerging global order is spearheaded by a few hundred corporate giants, many of them bigger than most sovereign nations. By acquiring earth-spanning technologies, by developing products that can be produced anywhere and sold everywhere, by spreading credit around the world, and by connecting global channels of communication that can penetrate any village or neighborhood, these institutions we normally think of as economic rather than political, private rather than public, are becoming the world empires of the 21$^{st}$ century.

*Globalization and Human Rights Violations*

It is evident that globalization has brought in its train, great inequities, mass impoverishment and despair. It has fractured society along the existing fault lines of class, gender and community while, almost irreversibly, widens the gap internationally between the rich and the poor nations. Globalization has resulted in gross human rights violations for millions

of workers (particularly women workers), peasants and farmers, and indigenous communities, particularly in the South.

(a) Globalization has resulted in the violation of the fundamental right to work. In their drive for profits, companies, in particular TNCS, have been restructuring their operations on a global scale. This has resulted in massive unemployment and underemployment, the worst situation since the 1930s. Two major impacts of globalization are noticeable. First, there is an accentuation of the process of the informalization of labor and the growth of the informal economy. Here, not only are the wages low, but also the legal protection of workers is minimal. Second, the 'feminization of labor' since women constitute the overwhelming majority of labor in the in low-wage industries. Workers in such industries are not only inadequately protected as regards health and safety, but they also do not enjoy security of employment in view of the tendency of such investors to move offshore to cut costs.

(b) Globalization poses a serious threat to the right of livelihood of millions of traditional farmers in the South. The requirement to comply with the GATT Final Act has opened up the agricultural sector to imports (mainly from the North) and as land laws are revised to facilitate corporate farming, there will inevitably be large-scale displacement of such communities. All these developments, and in particular the drive under the WTO regime to make access to food mainly dependent upon market mechanisms, are a threat to food security - the most fundamental of all human rights.

(c) Globalization has provided a new impetus to the destruction of the habitat and livelihood of indigenous communities in many countries of the South. The continuing displacement of such communities as a consequence of the intensification of such economic activities as mining and logging is a grim reminder of such violations of human rights.

(d) Where IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) are the main mechanism for promoting globalization, it has resulted in a massive violation of human rights. These SAP programs had resulted in a violation of the right to work, the right to food, the right to adequate housing, the right to health, the right to education and the right to development. The combined effect of the violation of the right to food and the right to health has had devastating consequences.

*The Role of Adult Education*

Given the above analysis, what should be the role of adult education? Generally, there are three possible responses to globalization and human rights – do nothing about it, engage with and accept it or resist it and/or build alternatives. Below I outline some suggestions and tasks for adult educators.

First, adult educators must challenge the discourse of accepting globalization as an inevitable product of 'development.' The phenomenon of globalization as packaged by the "Washington Consensus," its empirical basis, is very debatable. This implies resisting and confronting the 'totalizing' gaze of the ideology of globalization as an inevitable force of nature because it negates the centrality of human agency in history.

Second, adult educators must become more actively involved in generating awareness as well as articulating counter-critique of not only globalization is but its relationship/impact on education/lifelong learning. It means getting involved in creating alternatives such as accessible

fora for discussion and exchange of information, strategies aimed at building capacities for local groups to engage and confront globalization and its effects and supporting initiatives, networks and campaigns at the local, national and international level that aim at building solidarity especially among workers, women. Adult educators must actively oppose racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination. Third, adult educators must do more than just teaching about globalization or presenting academic papers about globalization and human rights. Adult educators need to develop new conceptual tools which contextualize the political economy of adult education and which recognizes that history, class, power and the state are all features that need to be taken into account in coming to grips with changes in the education, the economy and society (Brown, 1999). One way of developing new conceptual tools is to become more adventurous about crossing the narrow disciplinary 'borders' and seeking and appropriating new perspectives to track, inform and expand our analysis of processes of change inherent to capitalism and its transformations and expressions.

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# Creating New Stories: Exploring the Restructuring of University Adult Education in Ireland and Scotland

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to contextualise change in UAE in Ireland and Scotland, highlighting some of the issues facing the field, and drawing out some implications for the future of adult education in the university, particularly in its more radical and progressive forms.

## Introduction

This paper examines recent changes in university adult education (UAE) in Ireland and Scotland. Both countries have re-structured their adult education provision within the university sector. The purpose of this paper is to contextualise this change, highlighting some of the issues facing UAE, and drawing out some implications for the future of adult education in the university, particularly in its more radical and progressive forms.

UAE has a long tradition in both countries, and in the twentieth century UAE has had a clear understanding of itself as offering an alternative to 'provided' education whether from the perspective of the liberal tradition (education for its own sake) or from the radical tradition (challenging the mainstream, creating radical alternatives). These two important traditions have always been in creative tension. However the recent restructuring of UAE in the 1990s presents both the practice and the philosophy of UAE with a number of challenges. A key feature of these changes (and arguably the principle catalyst) is the accreditation of liberal adult education. In Ireland universities have been mandated to disengage from non-accredited courses, while in Scotland public funding for non-accredited courses was phased out in the mid-1990s, resulting in the overnight accreditation of liberal adult education programmes. This change is part of wider social and policy changes including the move away (in policy and practice) from adult education and towards lifelong learning. Moreover, there is less and less of a distinction between adult education and post-compulsory education and training, and a new focus on accessible and flexible provision, a focus qualitatively different from traditional social justice concerns of adult education. One result of this is a tendency for UAE to be equated – or even replaced – with institutionalised access initiatives and other forms of flexible entry.

## Changes to University Continuing Education in Ireland

Alongside these shared developments and concerns in Ireland and Scotland, there are a number of other factors unique to each country in shaping the current context of UAE. University continuing education has existed in Ireland for several decades. The National University of Ireland, Galway (formerly University College Galway) for instance initiated a programme of extra-mural education courses in 1949. University College Dublin has a similar history in that it has been offering courses for adults since 1949 when an Extra-Mural Studies Board was established by the governing body. Statutory recognition, however, has never existed

in a suitable form. Prior to the 1970s, there was even some hostility towards university continuing education, particularly evening degree and diploma courses, as they were seen by some sectors (teacher's unions, Institute of Public Administration) as both second rate and time consuming (Morrissey, 1990). Although this kind of hostility has more or less vanished (evening degree programmes have since been introduced), and some universities have established separate centres for adult and continuing education, UAE, both in its degree awarding and non-degree awarding forms, has not received full recognition either from the particular university involved, or the state. It is an area of activity that tends to overlap with many other services and organisations (for example, other university departments, state organisations, trade unions, community organisations, professional and private organisations), and has traditionally been accorded low status within Irish education.

The 1990s saw partial transformation of this 'low status' position within Irish education, a transformation that needs to be placed within broader changes in the structure of Irish higher education. Although Irish HE has experienced massive expansion since the 1960s, the greater part of this expansion has taken place in the extra-university sector (mainly Institutes of Technology), a sector characterised by a "preponderance of sub-degree programmes, heavily concentrated in the areas of business studies, engineering and applied science" (Clancy, 1997, p. 86). This expansion in the extra-university sector has led to a situation today where enrolments in the university and extra-university sectors are more or less equal, compared to 1965/66, when 77 per cent of higher education students attended university (Hyland, 1997, p. 3). This levelling of the differences between the two sectors (at least in enrolments) has led to the present situation in which the extra-university institutions, particularly the Institutes of Technology, are resisting any capping of the range of programmes they provide. The Universities Act of 1997, however, provides a legal guard against any higher education institutions using the word 'university' without the consent of the Education Minister.

This form of sectoral competition can be seen to have an effect on the future of university adult education. Universities are the "last and least" to be affected by changes in demographics (Department of Education and Science, 2000, p. 139), and as a result are under pressure from the social inclusion agenda to widen participation for disadvantaged groups, including adults. University adult education departments and offices are now viewed as playing a significant role in both the social inclusion agenda and lifelong learning. As is the case in many other countries, particularly those of the EU and the OECD, recent Irish government policy on adult education has shifted towards lifelong learning. Although such an approach was emerging in the early 1980s, and was a central theme in the *Report of the Commission on Adult Education* in 1984 (Kenny, 1984), the timing was evidently not right. Massive expansion in provision for a rapidly increasing youth population, coupled with the financial crises of the mid-1980s, ensured that a lifelong learning approach to Irish education provision could not be rendered a reality (Department of Education and Science, 2000: 54).

This situation changed significantly in the following decade, with the publication of both the Green and White Papers on adult education[viii]. The papers were given extra impetus by the introduction of the Universities Act of 1997, which stated that the objectives of the university should include the facilitation of "lifelong learning through the provision of adult and continuing education" (Section 12(j)). The Green Paper, *Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning*, outlined a range of activities for universities in order to reach this objective of lifelong learning,

which included widening the range of provision, especially through modularisation, workplace delivery, part-time provision, distance education and more open approaches to credit accumulation and transfer, and provision of access courses and tutorial and mentoring systems and off-campus provision. (Department of Education and Science, 1998, p. 80). The publication of the Green Paper was a momentous occasion for Irish adult education, and also one of its most considerable achievements to date. It was a statement of commitment by the Irish Government to invest and take seriously the adult education agenda. This interest from the state has been welcomed in adult education quarters as a partial vindication of decades of education work in state and non-state bodies, in community and out-reach programmes, and in voluntary and literacy programmes all over the country. The Green Paper was viewed at the time as the beginning of a process by which adult education, so long in the policy wilderness, finally comes in from the cold.[ix]

The White Paper, *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education*, (DES, 2000) has added to this sense of euphoria surrounding the field. It reiterated many of the points made in the Green Paper, in terms of moving towards a lifelong learning agenda and viewing adult education as a key factor in reducing social exclusion. It also makes a strong statement on the role of UAE in professionalising the field of adult education. One of the problems with UAE in Ireland up until now is the confusion that exists around the training of adult educators, as gaining a professional qualification is not mandatory in order to teach adults in a variety of settings. Only one UAE department offers a professional qualification. The Paper states "it is vital that, over time, qualifications for the teaching and practice of adult education be accorded formal recognition (DES, 2000, p. 150), with the government envisaging that the qualification as an adult educator "will be a third-level one."

So when you explore the situation of UAE in Ireland, there appear to be a number of changes occurring simultaneously. The elevation of adult education in general to the forefront of education policy, its increasing connection in the eyes of policy makers and others to a lifelong learning agenda, particularly when it comes to widening participation and the introduction of flexible forms of delivery, the accreditation of liberal adult education programmes, the increasing professionalisation of the field – all of these are taking place within a system of higher education that is experiencing a state of flux in which old boundaries and distinctions are being regularly challenged. Although the field of adult education has never before received so much attention, it could be argued that its remit has progressively narrowed, due to its appropriation by the state and higher education institutions, and the reduction of space for more radical visions and practices of adult education. This argument is highly debatable, and current changes in adult education can be seen to widen the remit of UAE in certain ways as well as narrowing its definition. Also, the move away from liberal adult education is not necessarily a bad thing, as for many, such provision was the sole purpose of adult education within the university, leaving any notion of UAE as a 'hotbed' of radicalism floundering. UAE now has an opportunity to really pursue such a radical agenda, an agenda that could only come to fruition within the historical changes outlined above.

**Changes to University Adult Education in Scotland**

The flourishing of university adult education in Scotland (and also in England) in the twentieth century had its origins partly in a *liberal* commitment to the democratisation of a

profoundly elitist system of higher education at the end of the nineteenth century. This took the form of the *University Extension Movement*, which provided lectures outwith the university itself (in this case Oxford and Cambridge). The *radical* tradition in adult education has been equally important, particularly in Scotland. This was profoundly influenced by the resurgence of the political left in post war twentieth century Britain which has in turn explained and understood itself with reference to the political ferment of the nineteenth century and the informal radical education which grew out of social movements such as Chartism.

In the context of the university, both of these traditions served to strengthen the Extra Mural tradition first established in the University Extension Movement so that most universities in Britain had firmly established Extra-Mural departments in the first half of the twentieth century. In the post war period, a number of debates emerged such as, a concern that the social purpose of the Extra Mural tradition was being lost as classes were attended principally by middle class students. This was countered by the idea that adult education should provide lifelong education for all as opposed to being focused on the disadvantaged. There was also concern about the rise of professional development courses, certificated courses and 'technical' courses, which were seen to move away from the ideals of the liberal tradition. By the end of the 1960s the Labour Government set up committees to review non-vocational adult education that culminated in the Russell Report (1973) (England and Wales) and the Alexander Report (1975) (Scotland). The Alexander report called for greater emphasis on professional development courses, certificated courses and a community development approach in some courses since it noted that the impact of university adult education on large sections of the population had been minimal. Following these reports there was a greater emphasis on vocational courses and thus a decline in the liberal tradition.

At this time departments were funded partly by the Scottish Education Department, student fees and local authority funding which made them distinct from the mainstream university departments. In some ways this gave them greater freedom to pursue their own agendas and they have often been characterised as 'alternative, radical spaces' within the university. However all this was to change and in 1989 Adult Education departments became the responsibility of the University Funding Council UFC (which later became the Higher Education Funding Council HEFCE and The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council SHEFC). This brought the departments under the same policy framework and scrutiny as other university departments and can be seen as the beginning of the end for 'radical alternative spaces' within the institution. Moreover, the 1990s brought a general restructuring of higher education in Scotland, which was to have a profound impact on university adult education.

From the mid 1980s there was a massive expansion of participation in higher education so that the number of participants in higher education in the UK doubled between 1981 and 1995. While this expansion has in fact been led by social classes I and II, arguably this transformed the system from an elite to a mass system of higher education (Scott, 1995) placing a renewed emphasis on the social purpose of democratisation of higher education (at least with respect to participation in provided education) but one which came from the policy mainstream as opposed to the 'marginal spaces' of adult education. Adult educators could be forgiven for thinking that their time had come. This expansion in participation was given further impetus by the extension of the title of University to 5 higher education institutions in Scotland (formerly known as Central Institutions) almost doubling the university sector in Scotland. At the same

time Further Education Colleges which previously offered mainly vocational and sub degree provision began to expand their higher national provision (equivalent to years one and two of degree level study). This meant that higher education was increasingly delivered in diverse contexts and the policy and practice of the former Central Institutions was given a higher profile than formerly. This included a much more explicit commitment to flexibility of provision (including part time study, modularised curricula and credit transfer arrangements) than the old universities (Schuller *et al*, 1998). This created the opportunity for reformist pressure to be brought to bear on the old universities as they participated in the same policy fora and became subject to the same funding arrangements. However, the oldest universities have remained largely unresponsive to these pressures (Morgan-Klein & Murphy, 2001) These system changes finally brought a wholesale re-organisation of adult education within the universities.

In short, the funding for the non-accredited liberal adult education courses was ended and departments were invited to accredit their provision and bid for mainstream funding from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. About two thirds of the money previously earmarked for non-accredited provision was then allocated to the newly accredited courses, while the remainder was allocated to short term projects designed to widen access to university study. This last activity has since been greatly expanded. These changes have been nothing short of traumatic for adult education. Key concerns have included, the way in which education has become increasingly marketised , the concern that the liberal ideal of 'learning for its own sake' would be lost and the worry that the mainstreaming of adult education would mean more conformist provision and the loss of the 'oppositional' character of adult education. The debate that ensued was both made more difficult and invigorated by the predominance of a powerful economistic discourse of lifelong learning in Scotland and in Europe as a whole which emerged out of an explosion of British and European education and social policy which had emphasised education for employability in the globalised knowledge economy. These policy documents and the legislation that followed both emphasised the importance of vocational relevance and the need for individuals (as opposed to the state) to take responsibility for individuals' lifelong learning. The predominance of this discourse and the structural changes in university adult education have all but destroyed its presence in England, but Scotland is different.

In May 1999, the Scottish electorate voted in elections to elect its first Scottish Parliament for almost 300 years. While the responsibility for many matters including education have always been devolved, the establishment of the Parliament has profoundly revitalised the Scottish polity and civil society. While some Adult Education Departments have closed or been restructured, there has also been a flourishing of activity including publication and inter-institutional co-operation within the adult education community in Scotland (Crowther *et al*, 1999). This community is influenced by both the radical tradition and a reformist or Fabian tradition and as such has strong links with both social movements and with Scottish government, the latter of which has placed greater emphasis on social justice in education leading to a divergence in Scottish and English education policy. This has led to a sense that that the adult education community in Scotland can reclaim its social purpose tradition despite the difficult structural changes of the past 5 years and the rise of an economistic discourse of lifelong learning.

The profound changes in British university adult education and higher education are still being debated. They have been represented as the democratisation of higher education.

However, quite apart from the fact that simply widening participation does nothing to democratise the content of what is provided, little actual widening of participation has in fact taken place (Murphy *et al*, 2001). Initially many adult educators welcomed the renewed emphasis on adult education in discourses of lifelong learning but the individualistic and economistic emphasis in lifelong learning policy and discourse have undermined this initial optimism. There is no doubt that the closure and restructuring of departments, particularly in England, has destroyed much, yet it is possible to discern the green shoots of recovery particularly in Scotland where a reformist and radical adult education community is beginning to reclaim its social purpose tradition.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

What do these changes mean for the future of UAE, in particular its more progressive format? In response to changes in the UK, Peter Scott argued for the potential of UAE to radicalise the mainstream. He suggested that these changes could end the marginal status of adult education and allow a student and equity-centred practice to transform the university. These changes also have the potential to reshape the nature of the client groups availing of UAE, one of which has traditionally been the leisured middle class, who could afford the time and money to take extra mural courses for their own enjoyment and personal development. Scott's 'adult education is dead, long live adult education' mantra, is useful in the present context. It could be that, however risible on the surface, efforts to reconstitute the field may provide the catalyst for a new positioning, not only of adult education within the university, but also between the university and the rest of society. UAE in the past has allowed the university to extend its remit as an institution dedicated to public service, and the provision of community outreach and extension programmes, access initiatives and extra-mural courses can arguably be construed as forms of public service. However, if Scott's radicalising of the mainstream approach is to be taken seriously, then the debate needs to move away from the confines of the institution and instead consider the potential of adult education in linking the university to the wider concerns of civil society. In this way, university adult education takes on a more radical agenda, situating the university at the forefront of strengthening democracy and defending learning potential from further colonisation by the state and the market.

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[1] A Green paper is a discussion document commissioned by the government. It is usually followed by a White Paper, a public discussion of the proposals in the Green Paper. The discussion and consultation process is formally completed by a government Bill, and then an Act.

[2] This view was exemplified in the headline of the Irish Times education supplement on the Green Paper (Irish Times, January 26, 1999) "Cinderella is getting her wish" adult education being perceived as the poor cousin of Irish education.

# Graduate Students' Perspectives on Adult Education

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**Abstract:** This research explored how graduate students conceptualize key terms of, and concepts in, the field of adult education. It sought to identify the terminology and related concepts that students in their first semester of a graduate program saw as essential in making meaning of the field.

Traditional boundaries in adult and higher education are changing. The influx of new kinds of students—particularly adult, "non-traditional", and professional students—demands innovative ways of thinking about processes and structures for teaching and learning (Weil, 1997). Two features of the changing practice of adult and higher education involve the exploration of implicit theories in action (Argyris & Schön, 1974) and an emphasis on the value of integrating experiential, propositional, and professional knowledge (Eraut, 1994). Allied to this is a recent shift in the understanding of knowledge and the nature of learning. Until fairly recently, universities tended to hold the relatively naïve view that their students were essentially empty vessels to be filled with knowledge in a process most aptly called "banking education" (Freire, 1993). Nowadays, it is now more widely recognized that learners bring with them rich pools of experience, that knowledge is socially constructed, that learning is both a social as well as a cognitive process, and that teaching and learning situations (whether in universities or elsewhere) are marked by axes of power and privilege that can heavily influence students' learning, perceptions, and achievements (Cervero, Wilson & Associates, 2001).

One way to integrate this knowledge is through the conscious attempt to discourage students from the wholesale adoption of others' interpretations, but instead to encourage them to realize how abstract concepts surface in their own practice. As students move from passive recipients to active creators of knowledge, they can enhance their own epistemological development (Baxter Magolda, 1996). We see these issues most clearly in our *Introduction to Adult Education* graduate courses. We design such courses to provide a stimulating introduction to the language, concepts, beliefs, and approaches that have shaped the development of adult education in North America. Students in these courses—mostly experienced adult education professionals—bring an essentially practical orientation to their studies. They often find it initially quite difficult to appreciate more theoretical interpretations, particularly those that question or challenge dominant educational discourses and practices. Beginning students often find it hard to develop fluency with the complex ideas and concepts that can help them understand and analyze the educational situations, processes, and practices that pervade their professional lives. They quickly discover that the language of ideas and the language of daily practice are not the same.

In addition, graduate students of adult education face the complication of making meaning of an ambiguous and poorly defined field of study. Historically, adult education has struggled with defining itself as a discipline and a practice (Courtney, 1989), largely due to the eclectic nature of its content and the variety of settings in which it takes place. Also, there is

often little consensus among scholars about the meanings and boundaries of the field. This problem becomes apparent when considering at the range of terminology and definitions used to describe adult education. For example, terms such as "continuing education", "recurrent education", "further education", "post-secondary education", "lifelong learning", "andragogy", "adult education", and "community education" are often used interchangeably (Jarvis, 1995; Tight, 1996). In essence, "the field of adult education has evolved a vocabulary possibly unparalleled in its confusion" (Peterson & Associates, 1979, p. 13). This terminological chaos contributes to a lack of clarification over the territorial boundaries of adult education which serves both to perplex students and impede its growth and legitimacy as a discipline of academic study.

Terminology is particularly problematic for entering graduate students. The graduate study of adult education attempts to fashion an academic discipline out of an explicit focus on practical issues and problems—an approach that tends to leave the relationship between theory and practice relatively unchanged. Yet, one of the central purposes of graduate education is to introduce experienced professionals to new knowledge and ideas so that they may enrich their existing frameworks of practical knowledge. Further, graduate education is intended to enable students to assess the value of common practices and approaches for themselves. In other words, graduate study should assist students to avoid the trap of regarding existing practices, and their links with wider society, as unproblematic or uncontested givens.

One way, obviously, to facilitate this is to help students develop their literacy about key concepts, definitions, discourses, and debates. However, though definitional issues are regularly debated in academic journals and at conferences, seldom has the challenge of defining the field been researched in places where it could have a significant impact on outcomes, i.e., on emerging scholars and practitioners in the field. Studying how beginning graduate students learn to make sense of an ill-defined discipline raises issues of both learning and teaching. For example, what terminology do students find most problematic? What concepts and ideas do they find most useful for understanding the field or their own practice? In what ways are introductory courses in adult education helpful to students? What are effective tools for helping students meet the challenges of learning a new discourse?

It was with these questions in mind that we designed a research study to explore how entering graduate students taking introductory courses of adult education make meaning of their field of study. More specifically, the study sought to identify the terminology and related concepts that students in their first semester of a graduate program saw as essential in developing an understanding of the field. Our approach is based on exploring how learning might be seen as a social practice. By this we mean examining how the context and conditions in which learning takes place might be critical to the learning process itself. If we wish our students to become familiar with the lexicon of words and phrases that define key concepts of adult education, then we need to pay attention to the means by which students develop such knowledge.

## Methodology

The study involved a purposeful sample of recently admitted graduate students in two Universities (one in Western Canada, one in Eastern USA) taking their first course in adult education. The sample represented all of the students from the entering cohorts at each university during the past two years. As part of their first course in adult education, each student was

required to maintain a working definitional journal to keep track of the terminology that helped them better understand and frame the field. By using the course material, class discussions, and any other resources at their disposal, the students were asked to select between 34-40 terms which they saw as the most significant terminology of the field and to develop a brief (2- or 3-sentence) definitions in their own words for each of them. In addition, towards the end of each course, students were asked to use selected terminology from the definitional journal or any other source to develop a concept map of the field of adult education (Novak & Gowin, 1984). The 25 definitional journals and 15 concept maps collected were analyzed by a constant comparative method and then organized into meaningful categories and themes (Patton, 1990).

## Findings

Analyzing the definitional journals and concept maps revealed a number of findings. We first focus on the terminology selected by the students. Next, we explore the process of compiling definitional journals and graduate students' reactions to this experience. Finally, we examine the concept maps and discuss the themes and patterns that emerged.

### *Terminology*

When analyzing the word choices several patterns emerged. First, the students had a tendency, not surprisingly, to select words that were specific to the field of adult education. For example, "andragogy", "autodidaxy", "conscientization", "transformational learning", "functional literacy", and "popular education" were often selected. Second, there was a tendency to select educational terms that are used in all systems of education (not just adult education); of these, "constructivism", "critical pedagogy", and "multiculturalism" were most prevalent. Third, we noted a predilection for students to choose philosophical and sociological terms over more historical or descriptive phrases. Here, terms such as "epistemology", "hegemony", "phenomenology", "praxis", and "technical rationality" were chosen by almost everyone. In addition, few students included any words that had an instrumental emphasis, indicative of teaching methods or strategies, that might directly inform their practice.

### *Compiling Definitional Journals*

Without exception, students found the process of compiling their own definitional journals challenging but also extremely useful. One student's comments typify the responses of many:

> When initially going through the readings I felt like I had gained a basic understanding of most of the terms. However, I was surprised at how difficult it was for me to articulate them in my own words. Having an understanding in my head and being able to communicate this to others are two very different things....And the gap between them is larger than I think.

Having students compile their own dictionaries clearly encouraged a richer understanding of the dominant terminology and concepts in a field derived from so many diverse elements and approaches. As one student claimed, "For me, deeper comprehension comes with review and analysis." Many students reported that they grew to discern the perspectives of particular authors to a much greater extent: "It shocked me to discover that not everybody defined things exactly

the same...and that authors' personal preferences or opinions about the concepts might affect their use of [the concept]."

Students also reported a change in perceptions of their own learning and noticed an improvement in their metacognitive abilities. One student described how she "became aware how much I often skim over words or phrases...and assume a definition based on the context of the literature." Another described "feeling insecure determining whether I had comprehended the concept correctly. Compiling the dictionary helped me appreciate that...and helped clarify the concept itself." A third described how, for her, "meaning becomes clearer with repetition and redefinition....I was surprised at the extent to which many of the unknown terms I noted several weeks ago I can now define." In sum, this comment typified the responses of many: "I now have a much deeper respect for the process of learning. It takes a lot of time...and it never lets up."

Finally, students' reported an increased awareness in their research abilities. One became aware of the strength of using multiple sources: "The words [I selected] would often appear in several different readings. Because I recorded the references as I came across them, I was then able to combine the information from several different sources into a more coherent definition." For another, "Checking the details of my sources also caused me to reread certain sections...and consolidated my earlier understanding....[and] in some cases, extend it." A third discovered the importance of correct referencing: "Previously, when I had written down words I didn't know, I never noted where I found it...so, I often had to spend a painful time looking for it again. Now, thanks to this assignment, I always include the text and the page number alongside."

*Concept Maps*

An initial look at the concept maps reveals the large degree of general similarity that existed between the two groups. In general, the students structured their concept maps in one of two ways. Some chose to place the term "adult education" at the top of their map and underneath place using progressively more narrow concepts to describe the field. Alternatively, students placed "adult education" at the center of their map, circled by a ring of broader concepts, which was, in turn, wreathed by an outer ring of narrower concepts. All the maps seemed to rely on terms derived from the course material and readings—such as "formal", "informal", or "nonformal" education—and lacking any terms that emerge from the students' professional practices or interests. Also, the maps closely follow the approach of the set readings by describing the field using a largely philosophical orientation. Predominantly, the terms used to describe the field appeared to cluster within four areas: adult learning sites, types of learning, theories of learning, and philosophies of education. This is particularly striking since all the participants were practicing adult educators and might be expected to hold at least an implicit understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an adult educator. However, that implicit practitioner's understanding does not seem to emerge in these maps. Instead, the knowledge presented in the texts is privileged . What gets reflected in the maps is a decontextualized perspective of the field; a personal portrayal of the individual adult educator, i.e., the practice of the map's designer, is absent. A second observation is that there appears to be a division in students' minds between theory and practice. These maps give no indication that students make connections between course readings and their potential applicability. Students may theorize about their work and they may be able to conceptualize the field in their practice but the connection between the two was not manifested in the maps. Third, we noticed a significant

absence of the adult learner in the maps. Only a few students put the term "learner" or "adult learner" on their map. On most maps, the learner is either absent, or, when mentioned, unadorned by additional concepts which might give add details about who the adult learner is. The learner is portrayed as one-dimensional without any recognition of factors, such as age, cultural difference, learning styles, etc. that impact the learning and teaching experience.

**Discussion and Implications**

The findings of this study reveal several issues and implications about how beginning students make sense of unfamiliar discourses and concepts. First, when listing their key terms, students obviously seemed to emphasize words that they had most likely never seen or used before, regarding them as particular to the field of adult education. These lists provide a template of terms and concepts that students perceive as unique and separate from other disciplines. They also can serve to remind faculty of the essential terminology which might be covered or reviewed in introductory courses.

Second, students predominantly feature sociological or philosophical terms. Partly, this results from the choice of readings given by instructors; these terms are commonly found in many introductory texts. However, what is significant is that the words chosen are, without exception, from an outward focus. This is, the students' initial tendency appears to be to identify terminology that is more descriptive of others' conceptualizations and depictions of the structures and foundations of the discipline, instead of regarding themselves as possessors of much valid knowledge and focussing inwardly on their relationship to the field. Furthermore, in the journal entries, we noticed a strong concern among students to get the "right" definitions. Possibly, once there is greater clarity about the boundaries of the field in students' own minds, they may be more likely to reflect on their own locations within the discipline or feel more comfortable with any conceptual ambivalence.

Third, it was apparent from this study that there is still a high degree of confusion among our students about the field of adult education. Partly, this due to the ambiguous and complex nature of the field itself, but part of it also may result from the design of introductory courses in adult education. Most survey or introductory courses are designed to offer a broad perspective of an area of study with the intent to provide students with an understanding of pertinent literature, an historical perspective of how the field evolved, a sense of its general philosophies and approaches, and an overview of its central topics, issues and areas of contention. In addition, students are expected to begin to develop an appreciation of how the field is bounded and framed in relationship to other disciplines and areas of practice. Our findings suggest that just reviewing and discussing pertinent literature is less than adequate for students to grasp these complexities.

Our last point relates to the notion of theorizing and how faculty can nurture appreciation and use of theory. We define theorizing here as the process of interpreting, explaining, or judging intentions, actions, and experiences. So, asking our students to develop dictionary definitions and concept maps encourages them to begin theorizing for themselves. As we indicated earlier, our novice graduate students are reluctant to tackle what they consider "theory", regarding it as separate from, and alien to, much of their practice. They have yet to appreciate the extent to which all theories are the product of some practical activity and all practical activities are guided by theory. So, for us, the process of theorizing involves starting from the students' own understandings of the concepts themselves and of the arrangements and constructions of those

concepts that students find familiar and helpful. The words and phrases chosen by the students—along with the ideas they represent and the relationships between ideas—become the building blocks of such theorizing. However, the process is neither static nor conclusive: new concepts gain greater meaning as they become more familiar or as new relationships are discovered or developed. As concepts become more differentiated, they are never "finally acquired" but are always being learned, modified, and made more explicit and more inclusive. Also, the overt representation of concepts and their linkages through concept mapping encourages learners to discuss why a particular link is good or valid or to recognize missing links between concepts (Novak & Gowin, 1984). In these ways, learning and theorizing becomes less the acquisition of others' prior ideas and more the construction and creation of one's own meanings.

## Conclusion

Definitional journals and concept maps are an excellent learning tool for helping students build and reflect upon their personal and professional knowledge. By constructing their own definitions and maps and sharing and explaining them to others, students experience an increase in understanding and confidence in their cognitive abilities. Perhaps most importantly, beginning graduate students come to realize that the engagement with the making of meaning is an essential process in, and about, understanding adult education. By the careful recording and questioning of complex or problematic concepts and the creative production of maps linking these concepts, students are able to relate new knowledge to their existing understandings. Through our use of definitional journals and concept maps we intended to follow a long-established principle of adult education: encouraging learner agency. In our work, we have repeatedly found that, once students come to see the bigger picture and how many pieces it takes to construct the complex puzzle that is adult education, they then feel less isolated or passive against external forces and become empowered to act as agents of change themselves. In sum, we believe that to be effective, learning must start with the interest and experience of learners themselves. For us, the most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Hence, we strive to engage our students in the production of their own knowledge rather than the unthinking adoption of others' ideas and terminology. How successful we are remains open to question, but we take heart from the comments of one of our recent students:

> By paying deliberate attention to the words and phrases and how they're used, I've begun to feel much more comfortable with the academic language used in educational discourse. I used to think that academia liked big words and would often take very simple concepts and place complicated labels on them just for the sake of it. Now, I regularly catch myself using those very terms that used to scare me so much.

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# Les Nouveaux du Travail et de la Carrière

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## La formation continue et les nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière

L'identification des nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière est source d'inquiétude dans la révolution actuelle du travail (Kirby et al., 2000). Car les bouleversements conséquents à cette révolution en cours peuvent conduire à une plus grande cohésion sociale, ou encore, à une fracture sociale (Meda et al., 1997). Selon l'Union Européenne (1997), la cohésion sociale (la nature et la force des liens qui unissent les membres de la collectivité) passe désormais au premier plan des préoccupations individuelles et socio-économiques. C'est pourquoi toutes les sciences humaines sont sollicitées pour éclairer cette problématique cruciale (CRSH, 1999). Le domaine de la formation continue ne fait pas exception. Il peut apporter une contribution complémentaire des plus importantes à cette priorité collective. Un cri d'alarme est donc lancé: tenter de réduire les risques d'éclatement social, et surtout, de traduire la disparité des conditions actuelles en de nouvelles formes de représentation du lien social où chacun serait partie prenante.

Dans ce contexte, comment la formation continue doit-elle porter une attention encore plus grande à l'évolution des nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière? Dans cette communication, nous traitons en un premier temps, des liens entre l'émergence de ces nouveaux sens et la cohésion sociale. Car il nous faut comprendre ces liens avant même de s'interroger sur le rôle de la formation continue au sein de ces nouvelles réalités sociales. Nous ferons ensuite une brève revue des recherches récentes sur ces nouveaux sens en émergence. Ces deux premières rubriques génèreront des questions qui s'adressent différemment aux chercheurs et formateurs d'adultes d'obédience surtout fonctionnaliste ou surtout critique. Dans la troisième partie de cette communication, nous référons à nos travaux basés sur des entrevues réalisées notamment en 1997 auprès de 500 adultes en période de discontinuité professionnelle. Nous ressortons deux points importants dont devraient peut-être davantage tenir compte les chercheurs et les formateurs d'adultes, et tout particulièrement les adhérents à la philosophie centrée sur l'apprenant.

### *La cohésion sociale et le travail*

Avant d'investiguer le rôle des formateurs d'adultes au sein des nouvelles réalités sociales, il importe tout d'abord d'apporter certains éléments de réponse à la question suivante. En quoi des nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière ont-ils un rôle important à jouer sur la cohésion sociale?

Il y a un consensus, selon Roe et al. (1999): les crises de société sont d'abord des crises de sens. Ainsi, selon Bialliard (1997), l'identification des nouveaux sens partagés du travail et de la carrière se situent parmi les indices les plus révélateurs de la cohésion sociale. En effet, selon Roustang (1996), la question du rapport au travail est au centre même de la problématique de l'exclusion et de la fracture sociale. D'ailleurs, "le grand bouleversement à l'heure actuelle est sans contredit la remise en cause du travail-emploi comme principe fondateur de l'ordre social et de ses représentations" (Sue, 1992, p.123). À ce jour, les études relatives aux nouveaux sens du

travail et de la carrière sont encore rarissimes (Roe et al., 1999). Pourtant, elles sont primordiales pour redéfinir les notions d'utilité sociale (Sue, 1992), d'engagement socio-professionnel (Hall, 1996) et les stratégies d'aide à la carrière (Collin et al., 2000). Fait à noter, ces rares études observent des sens très contradictoires accordés au travail et à la carrière: une valorisation accrue et de plus en plus cristallisée du travail-emploi (Freyssenet, 1995), ou encore, une tendance à la création d'une société de la multiactivité (Gorz, 1997) exigeant une redéfinition en profondeur des notions de développement vocationnel. L'observation de ces sens contradictoires fait craindre le pire et le meilleur dans un contexte de pénurie d'emplois. Le pire: des risques réels de révoltes civiles contre le pouvoir politique et économique (Appay, 1997; Holmer et al., 1997). Car la crise n'est pas seulement économique: le tissu social et culturel est lui-même atteint (Rifkin, 1997). Le meilleur: le renforcement des liens unissant les individus grâce à de nouveaux consensus sur le sens du travail (Meda et al., 1997, p.36). Aussi, au sein de l'actuelle révolution du travail (Rifkin,1997), l'identification des nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière chez les divers acteurs sociaux est d'une importance capitale. Toute nouvelle tendance en émergence susceptible de se généraliser doit faire l'objet d'une attention toute particulière. Elle aura des répercussions indéniables sur la cohésion sociale ainsi que sur le développement personnel et vocationnel des citoyens.

Par leurs interventions, les formateurs d'adultes ont un rôle névralgique. Ils sont directement en contact avec les apprenants. Et ces apprenants, comme on le sait, sont justement les acteurs sociaux de l'émergence de ces nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière. Par ailleurs, dépendamment de leur adhérence à la philosophie fonctionnaliste ou critique, les formateurs interviendront bien différemment. Par exemple, les premiers priviligieront possiblement une insertion active visant à rebâtir une harmonie collective. Les seconds auront peut-être tendance à proliférer, par exemple, des cours de désobéissance civile pacifique visant à dénoncer des inégalités sociales flagrantes. Des recherches seront alors nécessaires pour évaluer l'efficacité de l'un ou l'autre des modes d'intervention.

*Deux visions futures du travail*

Pour mieux saisir les orientations possibles de ces nouveaux sens, et le rôle de la formation continue en regard de l'évolution de ces orientations, voyons tout d'abord deux principales visions futures du travail qui s'opposent sur la base même du sens à lui accorder: la centralité du travail-emploi, le multi-travail. La centralité du travail-emploi intègre de façon formelle les économies marchande et sociale (Rifkin, 1997). Les gens reçoivent un salaire marchand (déterminé selon l'offre et la demande) ou social (revenu minimal distribué par l'état). La cohésion sociale y serait en un sens assurée, car il y aurait valorisation du travail effectué dans les deux économies. Toutefois, cette conception de la centralité du travail-emploi est fortement critiquée: elle intensifie et structure à la fois la société duale (Meda et al., 1997). La deuxième conception du travail, soit celle du multi-travail, prétend que c'est désormais le temps libéré qui va structurer la société (Bialliard, 1997; Roustang, 1996). Tous reçoivent un salaire social en provenance de l'état, suite à la redistribution des richesses. Les gens offrent volontairement leurs multiples formes de travail selon leurs intérêts et compétences et sont reconnus socialement pour leur apport. Surtout, selon ses tenants, cette société de la multiactivité permettrait d'assurer la cohésion sociale (Meda et al., 1997) parce qu'elle "permet à tous les citoyens d'exercer des activités socialement utiles, conférant dignité et reconnaissance"

(Rosanvallon, 1995, p.125). Toutefois, cette vision de la multiactivité est fortement critiquée. Elle correspondrait à "l'utopisme des communauratistes ou des égalitaristes" (Létourneau, 1997, p.208). De plus, on ne sait pas comment les gens se situent par rapport à ces deux visions relativement contradictoires sur le sens accordé au travail (Barnett, 1999).

Ainsi, il est urgent que des études visent à identifier les tendances émergentes chez les individus eux-mêmes, car ils sont les acteurs sociaux prioritaires de tout changement de société (Collin et al., 2000). De même les stratégies en formation continue devraient se modifier en conséquence. Alors ici plusieurs questions se posent. Quelle doit être la position de la formation continue? Doit-elle faire la promotion du travail-emploi? ou encore celle du multi-travail? Doit-elle très vite cerner l'orientation de ces nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière afin de tenter de rallier les acteurs sociaux vers un consensus, et ce peu importe la nature de ce consensus? Car, pour Meda et al. (1997), peu importe la vision (centralité du travail-emploi; la multiactivité) qui prévaudra dans les débuts du XXIè siècle, la cohésion sociale pourra être prédite seulement si les nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière seront partagés; car ils s'avèreront alors des indices-clés de cohésion sociale.

*Les nouveaux sens du travail*

Outre ces deux visions prospectives du sens du travail, voyons de plus près ce que les recherches observent à titre d'indices émergents de ces nouveaux sens du travail. Comme nous l'avons souligné précédemment, au-delà des écrits d'opinions, ces études sont encore rares (Collin et al., 2000). Il y a notamment celles de Cannon (1997; 1994), Collins (1996) et Billiard (1997). Elles concluent que les jeunes conçoivent le travail-emploi comme un moyen parmi d'autres de développer des connaissances et des compétences. Ces jeunes sont plus souples en regard des changements d'emploi et ils véhiculent des sens très variés du travail. Mais les conclusions de ces recherches sont encore vagues. Elles concernent surtout les jeunes et nécessitent alors de nombreuses autres études pertinentes. Les autres recherches se subdivisent en trois groupes.

Un premier groupe de recherches a procédé à l'aide de sondages ou d'instruments psychométriques. Nommons à titre d'exemples: Vondracek et al., (1997), van-der-Veldi et al. (1998), Lebo (1995). Or, ces études ont un apport très mitigé à cause de l'aspect inédit des nouveaux sens du travail. Pour "être capables de déchiffrer le sens d'une mutation culturelle et d'en cerner les thèmes... [il faut] rompre avec les stéréotypes interprétatifs et culturels... les sondages d'opinion [et les instruments psychométriques] ne sont par conséquent sans aucune valeur tant qu'un premier travail d'interprétation et de thématisation n'a pas dégagé les questions ou les thèmes à soumettre au public" (Gorz, 1997, p.101). Comme le soulignent fortement Gorz (1997) et Hendricks (1995), ce n'est qu'à l'aide d'interviews que l'on peut vraiment aller chercher des indices des nouveaux sens du travail. Et c'est précisément ce que nos travaux (re: plus loin) ont utilisé.

Un deuxième groupe de recherches, quoique très rares, optent pour une analyse de l'histoire du sens du travail. Castillo (1997), Fragnière (1992) concluent que les nouveaux sens du travail ne peuvent se comprendre que dans une perspective historique élargie. Par exemple, Fragnière (1992) a identifié sept sens du travail à travers l'histoire. 1. une peine et punition (re: la condamnation d'Adam); 2. un effort en vue d'une récompense (ex: gagner son salut); 3. une vocation et satisfaction (ex: toute personne est appelée par Dieu à remplir une mission et par là

s'accomplir); 4. une force impersonnelle, une force de travail que l'on organise, achète et vend sur le marché; 5. un emploi: "sans lien avec le système, l'individu ne fait rien" (1992, p.82); 6. un déterminant du temps humain: le rythme de la vie humaine est conditionnée par le travail-emploi; 7. toute forme d'activités humaines: ce futur sens du travail du XXIè siècle constitue un effort de synthèse des 6 premiers sens hérités du passé. En cela, il correspondrait à la vision de la multiactivité. Mais parce que la conception du travail "est précaire, secouée par les changements sociaux et économiques" (Fragnière, 1992, p.78), plusieurs autres recherches sont nécessaires (Kirby et al., 2000).

Un troisième groupe de recherches sur le sens du travail consistent en une sorte d'épuration des divers sens du travail dans l'histoire. Par exemple, Ransome (1999) a étudié les fondements anthropologiques, économiques, philosophiques et psychologiques du travail tout au long de l'histoire. Il conclut que tous les concepts du travail sont basés sur trois principes fondamentaux: 1. l'expression d'un besoin d'action; 2. l'expression de la créativité humaine; 3. une activité profondément sociale visant à promouvoir la réalisation de besoins reconnus socialement. Ransome (1999) insiste beaucoup sur ce dernier principe, car selon lui, les critères opérationnels qui y sont reliés changent constamment selon les époques historiques et seront radicalement modifiés au XXIè siècle. D'où l'importance de procéder à des recherches visant à identifier les nouveaux sens du travail. Surtout il faut vérifier leurs critères opérationnels auprès des acteurs sociaux eux-mêmes afin d'être à l'écoute de toute nouvelle tendance en émergence (Gorz, 1997).

Ainsi, l'état actuel de la recherche sur les nouveaux sens du travail laisse de nombreuses questions en suspens. Comment la formation continue doit-elle vraiment porter une plus grande attention dans l'évolution des nouveaux sens du travail? La cohésion sociale passe-t-elle par une accentuation encore plus grande de la conscientisation des inégalités sociales, comme le veut notamment la philosophie critique de l'éducation des adultes? La cohésion sociale serait-elle mieux assurée grâce à une intensification d'une sensibilisation à mieux respecter l'harmonie sociale, comme le veut la philosophie fonctionnaliste de l'éducation des adultes?

*Les nouveaux sens de la carrière*

Voyons maintenant de plus près l'état des recherches relatives à une réalité très connexe au travail, soit celle de la carrière. On observe tout d'abord que les études liées aux nouveaux sens de la carrière consistent surtout en des analyses prospectives. Elles soulignent les éléments dorénavant disparus de la carrière. Celle-ci ne sera plus le centre de la vie mais plutôt une des facettes de la vie (Roe et al., 1999); "l'idée d'une carrière tout au long de la vie n'a plus tellement de résonance" (Toulmin, 1997, p.39); "l'identification avec le métier tout au long de la vie devient incompatible; entre la vie, la carrière et le travail-emploi, entre la personne et sa fonction productive, le divorce s'élargit" (Gorz, 1997, p.106).

Les analyses prospectives sur les futures carrières se subdivisent en deux courants. Dans le premier courant (la carrière en lien avec l'organisation), la carrière n'est possible que si l'individu est conscient que les organisations prospères sont des organisations apprenantes (Edmonston et al., 1998). C'est-à-dire elles sont notamment à l'affût de tout projet prometteur sur le marché mondial, se définissent comme intensément orientées sur la veille de l'information et planifient de constants réaménagements. La carrière liée à l'organisation apprenante s'avère donc proactive, sporadique et non-linéaire. Un deuxième courant d'analyses prospectives approfondit

la notion de la carrière auto-dirigée (Roe et al., 1999). Elle a plusieurs appellations: subjective ou privée (Toulmin, 1997), holiste ("pensée en fonction d'un cadre de vie général", Hall, 1996, p.xii), interne (Holmer et al., 1997) ou inconstante (*protean*) (Hall, 1996). Cette carrière auto-dirigée est "davantage menée par l'individu que par l'organisation" (Hall, 1996, p.xi). Elle consiste en un suivi d'expériences professionnelles s'accompagnant d'apprentissages intentionnels et accidentels indispensables. Pour réaliser cette carrière auto-dirigée, les études insistent sur la nécessité de relations très riches avec les personnes significatives en dehors du marché du travail (Parker, 1996) et les groupes particuliers de support dans la vie post-moderne (Hodgetts, 1996). De plus, certaines attitudes doivent être recherchées: l'interdépendance plutôt que l'autonomie (Fletcher, 1996), la mutualité et la réciprocité (Gorz, 1997), l'habileté à se rediriger soi-même dans sa carrière interne (Hall, 1996).

Ainsi, l'état des recherches relatives aux nouveaux sens de la carrière, laissent peu d'indices aux formateurs d'adultes. Doivent-ils encore mieux préparer les adultes à faire carrière dans une organisation apprenante? Si oui, doivent-ils inscrire leurs interventions davantage dans l'approche fonctionnaliste, étant donné que cette organisation elle-même ressemble beaucoup à une mini-société devant fonctionner harmonieusement et proactivement? Ou encore, doivent-ils inscrire leurs interventions davantage dans l'approche critique, étant donné que des travailleurs compétents se doivent d'être vigilants et critiques, notamment en regard de l'impact social et personnel de toute organisation? Il y a aussi d'autres questions. Les formateurs d'adultes doivent-ils encore mieux préparer les individus à mener une carrière auto-dirigée? Si oui, doivent-ils le faire selon l'approche fonctionnaliste (en invitant davantage les apprenants, par exemple, à jouer le rôle de sous-contractants visant l'harmonie des organisations en place)? Ou encore, doivent-ils procéder selon la théorie critique (en insistant davantage, par exemple, sur la création d'emplois dans l'économie sociale visant notamment à briser les inégalités socio-économiques les plus flagrantes)?

*Deux points majeurs ressortis de nos travaux*

Ici s'arrêtent les questions adressées aux chercheurs et aux formateurs d'obédience fonctionnaliste ou critique. Cette rubrique s'adresse plutôt aux adhérents à la philosophie centrée sur l'apprenant. De plus cette rubrique ne se base pas sur un ensemble de recherches, mais plutôt sur nos travaux (2000; 1998a; 1998b). Ces derniers ont été menés, en 1997, au moyen d'entrevues auprès de 500 autres adultes en discontinuité professionnelle. Et il y a notamment deux points qui sont ressortis. Ces derniers semblent avoir des incidences directes dans la pratique quotidienne de la formation continue axée sur l'apprenant.

*Être davantage attentif à la nécessité de l'alternance travail-emploi et volontariat.* Selon nos travaux, il se produit un glissement dans l'alternance entre travail-emploi et formation continue, ou dans ce que l'on convient d'appeler alternance étude-travail. Nos travaux laissent observer une confiance accrue dans une formation expérientielle au moyen des activités de volontariat. L'adulte, surtout les moins de 50 ans, cherche à combler la discontinuité professionnelle par une action sociale visible et vérifiable. Le C.V. devient alors plus garni. Les lettres de recommandation peuvent être obtenues de sources plus diverses. Les adultes sentent une pression pour réussir à conserver une image de personne que nous appelons vocationnellement active. C'est-à-dire une personne qui s'investit, soit dans des activités commandées par le marché du

travail et rémunérées, soit dans des activités sollicitées par les associations à but non lucratif, récoltant une rémunération faible ou nulle. Ce phénomène d'alternance entre travail-emploi et volontariat rejoint un peu ce que Pineau nomme "alternance entre formation expérientielle et formation formelle" (2000, p.133). Nos travaux proposent que la formation continue introduise davantage, dans ses objectifs, la préparation et le perfectionnement en vue d'une carrière socio-professionnelle. Celle-ci devrait être définie d'une manière élargie. La carrière professionnelle devrait dorénavant s'appeller une carrière de participation socio-professionnelle incluant le travail-emploi et le volontariat.

*Être davantage attentif aux liens être-faire*. Pour mieux composer avec la révolution du travail, il faut se situer au-delà de cette révolution. Et le point proposé ici permet, dans un sens, de se ramener à des dimensions trans-historiques. En remontant à des termes philosophiques premiers, comme l'être et le faire, cela permet de transcender de la révolution actuelle du travail. Car si, comme le prétend Rifkin (1997), c'est la fin du travail industriel tel qu'on l'a connu aux XIXe et XXe siècles, ce n'est pas la fin du lien être-faire. Ce lien est caractéristique de l'humain de toutes les époques historiques et le sera toujours. Selon nos travaux, c'est notre conception du lien entre l'être et le faire qui serait à l'origine de la diversité des modes du développement vocationnel. Et c'est à partir de cette conception que les adultes ont tendance à redéfinir leurs nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière. Les personnes interviewées se situent dans un continuum entre deux pôles opposés en ce qui concerne les liens être-faire. Ces deux pôles se caractérisent par deux axiomes vocationnels contraires: je suis, donc je fais; je fais, donc je suis. Les différences entre ces axiomes doivent être davantage connues. Elles ont d'importantes conséquences pratiques quotidiennes.

## Conclusion

Comment la formation continue doit-elle porter une attention encore plus grande à l'évolution des nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière? Les recherches actuelles génèrent beaucoup de questions et peu d'éléments de réponse. Mais au-delà de toutes ces questions, une réalité existe. Les formateurs d'adultes ont une responsabilité complémentaire certaine dans l'orientation de l'évolution des nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière. Et dans l'attente de recherches concluantes, la société doit s'appuyer sur les compétences et le sens éthique de ces derniers. Là n'est pas l'inquiétude! Le passé peut largement témoigner de la présence indéniable de ces deux éléments. Toutefois dans l'immédiat les chercheurs sont confrontés à une tâche immense et urgente. Ils doivent, tout comme les spécialistes de d'autres domaines, s'acquitter du rôle déterminant qu'ils sont appelés à jouer au sein de cette problématique de si grande envergure qu'est la cohésion sociale en lien avec l'évolution des nouveaux sens du travail et de la carrière.

# The Pitfalls and Possibilities of Labour Movement-Based E-Learning

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**Abstract:** This paper presents findings on informal learning and labour movement-based e-learning. It examines the participation of 40 labour activists from across Canada during a six week, online workshop, and focuses on the relations between online and offline activity. It suggests that e-learning can be used to support the goals of collective action and solidarity, and that the medium can contribute to the development of a working-class narrative that makes meaning in and energizes the lives of labour activists.

**Résumé:**Cet exposé a pour but de présenter les résultats d'une étude sur l'apprentissage informel et sur l'apprentissage en-ligne d'un mouvement ouvrier. Nous examinons la participation de 40 travailleurs activistes, à travers le Canada, pendant un atelier de six semaines offert en-ligne. Nous avons porté une attention particulière aux relations formelles et informelles entre l'activité en-ligne et hors-ligne. Cette étude suggère que l'apprentissage en-ligne peut être utilisé en support des objectifs d'une action collective et solidaire, et que le médium peut contribuer au développement d'un narratif de classe ouvrière qui fait du sens et énergise la vie des travailleurs activistes.

## Introduction

The labour movement has always made use of distance learning technology from cultural tools of dance and song and traditional mail service, to radio, film and telephonic media. Such tools were used to consciously inform and mediate ongoing activity in distant locations. As Taylor (2000) notes, in countries like Canada and Australia where populations are relatively sparse such technologies have been particularly important. Since the development of the most recent generation of web-based technologies, however, 'e-learning' has begun to be considered as a possible tool for the labour movement.

In this paper I outline some of the findings from a recently completed research project on labour movement e-learning.[1] In this project I looked at the everyday issues, structures and practices that defined the participation of 40 labour activists from across Canada during a six

[1] Project funded by the New Approaches to Lifelong Learning in cooperation with the Canadian Labour Congress. Interview materials are the primary focus of this paper, but the project involved telephone interviews with a stratified sample of participants as well as the collection of online survey material, interaction analysis of online postings and content analysis of online discussion. For the telephone interviews with labour activists a stratified sample was selected based key variables amongst participants in the workshop: participation level during workshop; gender; region of Canada; and large city versus small urban or rural settings. The data is drawn from one particular workshop entitled 'Organizing for May Day Celebrations' selected from a series of online workshops for labour educator/activists developed within a much larger research initiative entitled ***Union-Based Telelearning project*** (Principal Investigator: Jeff Taylor and Peter Sawchuk).

week, online workshop entitled 'May Day 2000'[2]. I asked, how did activist's broader life and labour movement activity affect their participation and informal learning? Are there less formalized goals that were or could be achieved in e-learning environments? Can e-learning be used to facilitate the goals of the labour movement generally in the context of informal online and offline learning? While there is plenty of research on e-learning per se, this project was unique in its focus on both informal learning and the issues and problematics of e-learning unique to working people and the labour movement.

Relevant issues for labour movement based e-learning considered in the research included the following. The interest of the labour movement in supporting direct action as well as skill and knowledge means that it is important examine the informal and formal relationships between online and offline learning. Explorations of e-learning amongst subordinate groups such as a diverse working-class must include discussion of the barriers of technological access and use. Also unique is the labour movement's interest in overcoming barriers of distance as an issue of national as well as international solidarity. Of course, the labour movement's interest in e-learning is not governed by a concern for credentialization, but rather "the development of 'knowing how to do' and 'knowing how to share' [that] is not restricted to the simply transmission of knowledge" (Henri and Kaye, 1993:29). More than this however the labour movement will also want to contribute to an expansive 'working-class narrative' in the context of local, regional, national and now globalized capitalism. This narrative helps people make meaning of their activity and from this they draw energy to engage in the extremely busy life of a labour activist. Finally, explorations of e-learning from the standpoint of the labour movement require a firm grasp of our roots and traditions in the area of education, learning and action. In particular it requires an appreciation for the oral culture of the labour movement. As Martin has commented:

> Part of the reason that the wider public knows so little abut unions is that so little of the internal wisdom is written down.... On paper, union input tends to be precise and defensive; in verbal communications, off the record, unionists are more eloquent and spontaneous. (Martin, 1995: 39-40)

The heart of labour education has always been rooted in *viva voce*, literally by the living voice of participants. Beyond a concern for (computer and written) literacy amongst rank-and-file workers, this fact may suggests specific 'cultural' challenges associated with the textual character of current e-learning technologies within the labour movement.

### Informal Learning, the Labour Movement & E-Learning

Informal learning has always been a necessary mainstay of educational practice for subordinate groups such as the working-class. While organized forms of educational activity are available within the labour movement, it remains an understood truism that the heart of labour and working-class learning is in the union meetings, union events, struggles on the street, picket-line, in the community and workplace (Spencer, 1994; Taylor, 2000; Sawchuk, forthcoming).

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[2] Beyond studying e-learning, the course was aimed at supporting organizing for May Day 2000.

Rising levels of formal education in the labour movement along with the Canadian population generally have hardly changed this fact.

In research interviews, activist involved in the online workshop highlighted the importance of informal learning and suggested a possible misconnect between the learning culture of the labour movement and the virtual, communication space provided by e-learning.

> It will not serve a useful purpose if people are just sitting there staring at screens and they don't know who they're talking to... The traditional way of doing things, getting together, getting in the room, feeling the tension, feeling everything, what people, you know you've been to conventions yourself, you can see the emotion and everything, you don't see that on-line. You don't see people's faces, and I know that's important to me, you know? Computers are a tool, they have a place, just like the tools that came before, [but] they're not to be substituted for what we really need. (Activist – Peterborough, Ontario)

> Being in a group to learn, for me that's better... because even if you go for coffee with three or four people participating, you talk about 'Oh I did this' or 'I did that' or 'I found this screen.' You know that kind of thing is where you get a chance to say 'Jeez I really had trouble this way' and somebody else says, 'Well why don't you do this.' That's what I found lacking in this workshop. It was not so much the national nature of it, but the disconnection from the people. (Activist – Winnipeg, Manitoba)

Activists consistently felt that e-learning could be a useful tool which complimented, rather than replaced existing traditions in the labour movement. Comments from activist also suggested that traditions of learning in the labour movement will not transfer to e-learning environments without the careful attention of both workshop designers and participants themselves. The critique of labour movement e-learning experience in comments such as the ones above, in fact, highlights the need for a better understanding of the dynamics of informal learning in virtual space as well as the relationship between this learning and practical activity offline.

Critiques aside, while the workshops were intentionally designed with adult education principles in mind – such as beginning from participant's own experience and the development of emergent learning themes – collective, participatory forms of informal learning and knowledge constructions were said to have occurred through online participation, e.g.

> [This] guy from BC was thirsty for information and people started providing it to him, and that gave us all the resources. To me, that's an example of where these on-line workshops really do work. Someone has an interest or concern and they're learning about something and other people contribute to it, and then the rest of us participate in that process by seeing how those answers work. (Activist - Edmonton, Alberta)

Examples such as these were more or less typical. They describe how the sharing of information in the e-learning environment resulted in useful learning experiences.

**Linking Informal E-Learning with Practical Action Offline**

Informal learning online occurred in the 'crevices' of the formal structure provided in the workshop. For these experiences to be useful however, interviewees claimed that learning online had to be translated into practical action beyond cyber-space.

> You know, and you don't have to learn a ton of things, although I have to admit I learned quite a few things, but you know [it] was good because then I shared it with my fellow activists. (Activist – Peterborough, Ontario)

> I got some interesting information but there was a major failure in the fact that I couldn't share it with the other activists in Sudbury and I saw that as very important. I mean you're going back to the core value of the labor movement. You're in a meeting, you're talking with other activists, you're sharing information with them, you know you're trying to get it out to people and use that as a tactic for organizing... (Activist – Sudbury, Ontario)

The insertion of experience and information gleaned from the workshop needed to be easily transferred to the offline world. The solution that emerged revolved around the creation of 'tools' that could be (formally or informally) created within online activity, and then transferred to the offline world. The importance of this for labour movement learning was not as well appreciated as it could've been at the outset of the workshop. Nevertheless activists created their own opportunities for this transference in a variety of ways. Many created reports and summaries of ideas, news and tactics from other activists for use at their local labour councils or workplace, e.g.

> You'd see an article [in the workshop] and then you'd bring it up, say at work or something, mention this article and then people expand from that on what things or experiences they have heard about and so conversation gets going. (Activist – Prince Albert, Saskatchewan)

Others, such as one activist from Eliot Lake (in Northern Ontario), transformed these ideas into tools to educate during a local strike support barbecue commenting, "I think basically my ideas came from the ideas that were floating around out there through the workshop itself."

**E-Learning and Barriers of Time, Space and Energy in Labour Movement Learning**

In keeping with one of the core rationales behind e-learning, much of the most valuable learning occurred amongst activists who faced the greatest barriers of time and distance. These were participants in more isolated locations such as Northern Ontario, the Vancouver Islands and so on, who operated away from the major urban centres, however, they were also women activists, particularly those with children in the home, e.g.

> I think for the smaller cities it's an issue because of the fact that those who want to participate are not able to as the courses aren't available in their towns. If enough people aren't taking them then the course doesn't go on... I didn't find [the workshop] isolated you at all, if anything it made you feel less alone... Well the best possible scenario would be to in a classroom setting, but because of the fact that all of these commitments are

there and you've got your kids going to school and stuff for me it's better to do it on-line like the way that we did it. (Activist – Eliot Lake, Ontario)

In addition to these substantial barriers to participation in labour education, it should be recognized that activists in general remain, as they have been historically, over-burdened. As one person put it, "there are not 76 hours in a day. Haven't figured out the solution yet" (Activist – Toronto, Ontario). The everyday lives of people structure how well certain educational and communication tools will work for them, as well as the quality of the overall experience. As a *substitute* for traditional labour movement learning, e-learning is a poor one. However, where the traditions of face-to-face educational activity and direct action are more difficult to organize, the addition of e-learning can make a particularly important contribution.

**The Capacity of E-Learning to Contribute to an Working-Class Narrative**

In a recent paper examining e-learning in the labour movement, Briton and Taylor argue against the notion that e-learning be used simply to deliver more information and more educational programmes to union members. Rather they discuss the potential for e-learning technologies to actually contribute to the core principles and values of the labour movement as a whole.

> The question, then, is not simply one of identifying the [e-learning] technologies that result in high participation levels, but of identifying the set of minimal beliefs that provide the foundation for learning and [the technologies] that best facilitate the cooperative and collaborative ideals of that learning community. (Briton and Taylor, 2000: 14)

As with union education generally, e-learning is not credit-based. It is voluntary, social-movement based learning, and its practical relevance to activists is challenged by their jam-packed schedules and the limited resources of the labour movement. However, this research suggests that the relevance of e-learning can come in several forms: knowledge and skill building; direct action and organizing; as well as the production of the kind of meaning and understanding in people's lives that energizes beyond the immediate context. Labour activists in this research spoke of a process of meaning-making which I've referred to as the development of a broad working-class narrative. One activist captures the notion this way.

> When people suddenly discover that there are some roots to [the labour movement], because of course it's never taught in school, they really find that fascinating... It's a funny sustaining kind of thing, it's less that it helps your activism instantly, but it does I think help in the long-term as people find the energy to keep going. (Activist – Edmonton, Alberta)

The ability of activists to stay engaged, and to find and create relevance in their activism is rooted in their commitment to issues like social justice and equity. However, it is also true that contributions to this meaning-making process can be found in e-learning environments where

people can see their lives as part of a larger social struggle with deep historical roots and more than its share of successes.

## Conclusions and Future steps

Activists felt that for the labour movement to make use of e-learning it had to be linked with existing face-to-face connections and the best traditions of informal and more formalized labour movement education. E-learning was neither a substitute for existing labour education nor labour's organizational activities. Rather, it was said to have the potential to enhance these core practices, and several activists linked the potential of e-learning with the achievement of greater forms of participatory democracy in their own unions.

Expectations of the technology among activists were critical to understanding their assessments of their own experiences in the workshop. The technology supports threaded, asynchronous, text-based messaging and is a 'less-than-mature' educational medium (Feenberg, 1999). Those who expected something more were, inevitably, disappointed. While communication practices can be improved, at this juncture in e-learning technology, we clearly are not able to produce the kinds of deeply satisfying human experiences that activists have come to associate with learning in the labour movement. Those who considered e-learning as a tool rather than as an infrastructure or replacement for current educational and/or communication frameworks consistently evaluated the experience positively.

Finally, an emergent discussion among activist in the research also centred around the distinction between 'communications' and 'education' in the labour movement. Removing the artificial barriers between the two in the context of computer mediated communication, in fact, affirms a belief that the roots of labour education must continue to lie in the ongoing, informal learning of unionists.

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# Enlightenment and engagement in adult education for democratic citizenship: Lessons from the Citizens' Forum and the Participatory Budget

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## Introduction

In broad terms, adult education for democratic citizenship refers to the development of critical citizens who are willing and able to participate in democratic life. This encompasses a variety of learning avenues, ranging from formal civic courses to non-formal workshops on specific topics to informal learning acquired through direct experience. Among the multiple goals typically pursued by citizenship education, two are particularly relevant for this paper. The first is to contribute to the development of citizens who are well informed and are critically aware of the issues of the day. The second is to contribute to the development of active citizens who can engage effectively in democratic processes of deliberation and decision-making in their own communities.

Indeed, the development of an enlightened and engaged citizenry has long been an important part of the adult education tradition. It can be stated that these two goals should be simultaneously sought through programs in which 'enlightenment' and 'engagement' complement each other. But this is a normative statement. In real life, many programs promoting democratic citizenship tend to emphasize one of the two dimensions, perhaps assuming that the second one will arise as a natural consequence of the first. Adult education programs that focus on the development of enlightened citizens usually do not put much effort into preparing them for active and meaningful engagement in community affairs or in helping to create and sustain the political structures of participatory democracy that could facilitate such engagement. On the other hand, programs that provide enabling structures for political participation (usually carried out by progressive local governments) do not tend to pay enough attention to the development of pedagogical strategies that can assist those with less experience in democratic deliberation and decision-making to participate better and to critically examine broader social issues. Each one of these models seems to take for granted the existence of a reciprocal spillover effect that results from their programs. 'Enlightenment' programs assume that awareness of issues eventually leads to social and political engagement, whereas 'engagement' programs assume that involvement in local social action eventually raises an interest for the examination of larger issues.

This paper explores these twin assumptions by examining two successful programs of state-civil society co-determination which have become paradigmatic examples of 'enlightenment' and of 'engagement' respectively: the Citizens' Forum of Canada and the Participatory Budget of Porto Alegre, Brazil. After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the enlightenment and the engagement models, it is argued that the field of adult citizenship education can greatly benefit from a more systematic collaboration and dialogue between them. Such a dialogue could help to reconcile five 'separations' that permeate this field: a) the separation between enlightenment and engagement; b) the separation between macro (international and national) and micro (local) issues; c) the separation between deliberation and decision-making; d) the separation between discussion and social action; and e) the separation between adult civic education and participatory urban planning.

## The Citizens' Forum (CF)

Citizens' Forum was arguably one of the most important Canadian contributions to adult citizenship education, and provided a methodological model that was followed by many other countries

interested in using mass media to promote national debates (Lowe 1975, Selman 1991 and 1998, Welto 1998). The CF, which had as a suggestive subtitle 'Canada's National Platform', was a joint project of t Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) that began in 1943 under the leadership of E.A. Corbett and Isabel Wilson, and continued for two decades until 1967. The CF sprung from a similar project (the National Farm Radio Forum) carried ou by the same institutions in rural areas, in an attempt to broaden the social, cultural and political issues for debate and include urban audiences. Paradoxically, despite incorporating a broader agenda (or precisely because of it) the CF never attained the level of participation enjoyed by the Farm Forum (Selman 1998).

The CF was part of a strategy designed by adult educators to reconstruct society in a context of economic depression and a world war. Its main goal was to engage Canadians in all parts of the countr through mailings and radio broadcasting, "in an informed consideration of issues in which Canadians have a common interest" (Selman et al. 1998:52). Essentially, the CF was a national discussion group program which involved printed study materials, weekly radio broadcasts, and local study groups to he Canadians in all parts of the country form their own opinions and arguments on issues of general concern through an informed and balanced consideration of different perspectives of those issues. Among those issues were the pros and cons of censorship, professionalism in sports, religious educatio in public schools, strikes, disciplining youth, progressive education, compulsory treatment of alcoholic small farming, immigration policy, national planning, and labour unions' political involvement.

The CF broadcasted weekly programs from October to April, and each program was accompanied by discussion pamphlets. Isabel Wilson, the study guide editor of the CF, produced over 300 of these pamphlets. In all of them, she displayed an extraordinary talent to summarize long and complex documents, and to translate them into simple and clear language. She was also able to develop the topic in a challenging, interesting and debatable format with a national audience in mind, and to present a balanced and fair view of both sides of an argument (Selman et al. 1998). At the end of each broadcast the discussion groups were invited to send their opinions on the topic to the program's office and summaries of those opinions were aired in subsequent broadcasts and

Welton (1998:43) points out that "an educational form such as the Citizens' Forum makes sense once we understand that Canadian adult educators were attempting to develop an adequate practice of participatory democracy." These adult educators, indeed, were trying to enhance citizen self-understanding and political competence through the maximization of dialogue opportunities. If we understand participatory democracy as a collective process of deliberation and decision-making, and if we understand political competence as the capacity to understand issues and influence decisions, two questions can be raised. First, did these attempts to develop political competence and an adequate practice of participatory democracy succeed, particularly among the poor? Second, and more importantly, were there real and sustained attempts to develop that "adequate practice" of participatory democracy? According to some accounts (e.g. Faris 1975, Wilson 1980) the answer to these two questions is no.

Indeed, although the Citizens' Forum promotional brochure (November 1943) promised that upcoming bulletins would contain ideas for action projects, no specific ideas were included in subsequent bulletins. Unlike the National Farm Radio Forum, there is no evidence either in Citizens' Forum or CAAE records that show any success with action groups during the first year of the project. By the second year, action projects were neither publicly encouraged nor even discussed by forum staff This was partly due to political and financial constraints on both sponsoring organizations. It was also the result of an internal debate in which the 'national enlightenment' approach (espoused primarily by Forum secretary Dr. K.W. Gordon from Saskatchewan) prevailed over the 'local engagement' approach

(advocated by Manitoba's provincial secretary Mary Bishop, labour union representatives and some adult education leaders) prevented the Citizens' Forum from nurturing the development of social movements (Wilson 1980:68-71). In the same vein, Faris (1975:109) points out that because of the national scope of the CF audience, regional and local topics were seldom dealt with. This was a strength, in the sense that Canadians gained a wider view of issues, but also a weakness, because local issues of citizens' concerns -- those very issues that could spur direct collective action -- were omitted. In this regard, George Grant, the forum first secretary, noted that the general and diffuse nature of the topics attracted only the middle class, and that there was almost no possibility of developing action projects among the lower class unless topics were relevant to that class (cited in Faris 183, fn.85).

Summarizing, CF can be characterized as a campaign of public information and discussion about the main problems facing democracy. As such, CF did more to raise awareness of issues for personal enlightenment than it did to encourage personal or group action, or to develop a working model of participatory democracy. The role of the CF in promoting citizenship education, then, was to supply a background of information and present conflicting perspectives on the critical issues of the day. Although CF sparked a few community initiatives (such as the public housing movement in Toronto during the 1940s) in overall terms it is fair to say that public information did not result in social action (Butterwick 1998, Faris 1975, Kidd 1980, Selman 1981, Wilson 1980).

**The Participatory Budget (PB)**

The participatory budget of Porto Alegre (1989-present) followed a different strategy to engage citizens in democratic processes and community building. Instead of departing from an intellectual debate about national policies or international affairs, it started from a discussion among neighbours about the most appropriate and fair way to allocate municipal resources in their community. This process has been repeated every year since 1989 involving more than 100,000 people in deliberation and decision-making in Porto Alegre, and has been adopted by many municipalities in Brazil and abroad.

The PB is essentially an open and democratic process of public participation through multi-tiered meetings which enables ordinary citizens to deliberate and make decisions collectively about municipal budget allocations. This includes neighbourhood discussions and decisions about priorities regarding investments in local infrastructure (e.g. pavement, sewage, storm drains, schools, health care, child care, housing, etc.), but also forums on city-wide issues such as transit and public transportation, health and social assistance, economic development and taxation, urban development, and education, culture, and leisure. The neighbourhood meetings on local infrastructure tend to attract a majority of low-income groups, and the city-wide issues tend to attract mainly middle-class people. This should not be a surprise, since middle-class neighbourhoods have no major infrastructural problems.

Throughout the years, the PB has promoted, among many previously disengaged citizens, a sense of community and solidarity, a general understanding of urban issues, a demystification of the budget (previously a monopoly of experts in city hall), and an interest in larger political affairs. It has reduced corruption and clientelism in local politics, and has strengthened existing community organizations and sparked the creation of new ones. The PB constitutes an unusual experiment of community-state co-determination because it succeeded in overcoming the three main hurdles of participatory democracy: the so-called problems of implementation, inequality, and co-optation (Abers 2000).

In my own research in Porto Alegre, through interviews with grassroots participants and community budget delegates, I found that, although this model of local participatory democracy is not without flaws, the amount of political learning and civic virtues acquired by many ordinary citizens through direct involvement in deliberation and decision-making is certainly impressive. However, this informal learning, and the consequent gains in political efficacy among the most marginalized groups,

can be characterized as incidental, in the sense that it was not a result of a deliberate educational program. Perhaps the learning could have been faster and greater if adult educators had facilitated the process. Moreover, while the knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding local democracy changed dramatically among many participants as a result of direct involvement, there is no evidence that such involvement led them to a better understanding of national and international issues and policies, or to become more critical thinkers.

The pedagogical dimension of the PB has not been yet seriously considered, and although it has been recognized ex-post facto by some researchers (e.g. Pontual 1999), as of today there is an absence o adult education initiatives accompanying the political process. Although the PB has some municipal workers who act as regional coordinators, their role is more administrative and bureaucratic than educational. One of them, who comes from the Freirean tradition, told me that they should be doing more popular education work, but he admitted that generally the lack of training on these theories and methodologies and the constant pressures of time prevent them from undertaking educational responsibilities. In sum, while the accomplishments of the PB are impressive, it is my contention that th civic learning that takes place in it could be greatly enhanced and better distributed among participants i deliberate educational interventions are incorporated into the process.

**Summary and Comparative Analysis**

The Citizens' Forum of Canada and the Participatory Budget of Porto Alegre share an international reputation of being successful and long-lasting programs that have been emulated throughout the world. Both programs are located in that space of social interaction between the state an civil society that can be defined as a 'public, non-state sphere' (esfera publica, no estatal). In the CF the state was involved through the CBC, a crown corporation, and civil society through the Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE) and local study groups. In the Participatory Budget the state is involved through the direct participation of the municipal government, and civil society through neighbourhood and community organizations. Interestingly enough, while both models provide opportunities for significant civic learning to occur, neither of them contemplate the direct interaction o adult educators with the learners. The CF model assumes that the content of the materials and the interaction among members of the discussion groups provides sufficient conditions for civic learning. The PB assumes that the best way to learn democracy is by doing it, and thus it is the socialization in th democratic process, through direct participation in collective deliberation and decision-making, that constitutes the most appropriate vehicle for civic learning.

Besides these and other similarities, however, there are several important differences between th two models. The CF can be understood as a national enlightenment program that may or may not lead t social action, whereas the PB can be considered as a local engagement program which may lead or may not lead to civic learning.

The Citizens' Forum of Canada provides a good example of a model of citizenship education that focuses on enlightenment. It is a national program that attempts to promote the understanding of macro issues of general interest to all citizens, and open discussions about these issues. In this model, the moment of deliberation is not linked to the moment of decision-making, as no enabling structures were designed for people to participate in such a process. The only participation of people in decision-making consisted of sending feedback to the program developers on the outcomes of the discussions an their opinions on the materials, and this feedback could be used by the CBC and the CAAE to improve the program. This model, which seldom includes a community project component, is essentially deductive: it was expected that the analysis of large national issues would eventually lead people to examine more critically their own local reality, and then to take action upon them. The printed materials

of the Citizens' Forum -- prepared by professional writers -- deal mainly with content, which is presented from two different (usually contradictory) perspectives in order to encourage debate. In this model, empowerment is understood as the development of the learner as a critical thinker, that is, as someone who can understand an idea, a concept, an argument or a fact from different perspectives, and is able to assess the shortcomings and strength of each perspective. Hence, the guiding purpose of this model is critical understanding of current social reality. The main civic virtue that arises from this model is tolerance, as citizens who are aware of approaches other than their own are more open to recognize and value them, and to critically examine their own.

The Participatory Budget is a good example of a model of citizenship education that focuses on engagement. It is a municipal process of co-governance that privileges social action on local problems, that ensures community projects and that links the moment of deliberation with the moment of decision-making through enabling structures of participatory democracy. This model is basically inductive: it is expected that active participation in local issues will generate the need for learning in order to better understand the different causes of problems and to study possible solutions. It is also expected that successful local participation will eventually nurture the political confidence and the necessary skills to undertake bigger projects, and the need to better understand larger social, environmental and political issues. The main printed materials of the Participatory Budget deal with its rules and regulations, which are developed collectively by participants and city representatives, and are subject to change every year. Other printed materials include regular newsletters describing some of the public works undertaken as a result of the participatory budget, and comments from participants (generally laudatory) about the process and its outcomes. In this model, empowerment is understood as the development of the political capital of the poorest sectors of society, that is, their capacity to influence political decisions. The main civic virtue that arises from this model is solidarity, as participants must openly confront their own needs with the needs of other people who may be in more difficult situations. Moreover, the process of ranking priorities for budget allocations help people to move from their own narrow interests to the wider concerns of the collective, and generate dynamics of mutual help and support.

## Conclusions

One of the assumptions of the enlightenment model is that critical awareness constitutes a departing point of a process that eventually will lead to social action. Likewise, the engagement model tends to assume that once people are actively engaged in local governance, they will feel confident to undertake larger challenges and they will become interested in larger politics. In short, while one model assumes that the awareness acquired through learning leads people to undertake social action, the other assumes that the challenges of social action lead people to undertake learning projects. A scientific test of the relative validity of these two parallel assumptions is beyond the scope of this paper, but the available evidence emanating from the two case studies suggests that there is no 'natural' leap that takes place by itself. This is confirmed by a recent large international study on citizenship and education, in which it was found that there is not necessarily a positive correlation between civic knowledge and engagement. For instance, samples from Colombia, Portugal and Chile showed low civic knowledge but high civic/political engagement. Conversely, samples from Finland, Norway and the Czech Republic showed high civic knowledge but low civic/political engagement (Torney-Purta 2001). This prompts me to suggest two theses.

The first thesis is that, since the 'natural leap' does not always occur spontaneously, the cross-fertilization and interaction between enlightenment and engagement can be improved through intentional and proactive interventions. This thesis may seem like a truism, but unfortunately the

dialogue and collaboration between adult educators and urban planners has not been plentiful. Coming back to our examples, the participatory budget can greatly benefit from adult education, and the Citizens' Forum could have been significantly enhanced by community development strategies. True, the CF had a golden opportunity to include direct local action as early as 1946, but Mary Bishop's proposal in this regard did not receive any serious consideration.

A question that arises from this first thesis relates to the most appropriate balance in adult citizenship education programs between micro and macro affairs, between enlightenment and engagement, between deliberation and decision-making, and between discussion and social action. Following John Dewey, the challenge is to find the best ways to integrate political engagement in local communities with a larger cosmopolitan vision. This is about acting local and thinking global, as well as connecting local dynamics to larger issues. Considering the lessons from these and other experiences, it is possible to argue that a citizenship education program can be more successful in promoting an active and informed citizenship if it is able to link the moment of deliberation with the moment of decision-making, and if it is able to connect awareness with social action. At an abstract level, this is a sensible statement. It makes sense to say that programs should always pursue simultaneously enlightenment and engagement. At the practical level of implementation, however, programs must start somewhere.

Based on the relative success of the Farm Forum vis-à-vis the Citizens' Forum, on the lessons of the Antigonish Movement, on Freire's literacy work and on my own observations and interviews in Porto Alegre, a second thesis arises: engagement is more likely to lead to enlightenment than the other way around. This is not necessarily new, but in light of the continued presence of many adult citizen education programs that still begin and end with 'enlighenment strategies, it is a point worth reiterating. This thesis, which has concrete practical implications. suggests that the immediate, known and local is a more appropriate space to initiate adult education projects for democratic citizenship than the more distant realm of national policy and international affairs, too removed from everyday life and over which ordinary citizens have little influence except on voting day. At the same time, the feeling of confidence and the subsequent increase in political efficacy that comes from small collective achievements can become a powerful engine for larger social enterprises, and for further learning about the social world.

# Agency in the Knowledge Society:
## Social Movements and Knowledge Creation

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**Abstract:** This study documents the experience of popular educators of the Atlantic Popular Educators Network (APEN) who help create knowledge for a variety of social movement and community groups. Through the use of case studies, drama, media confrontation, and collective narratives, these popular educators are helping others through knowledge creation to construct identities, articulate a social vision and confront power. With the transformation from a resource based and industrial society to a knowledge society, this creation of knowledge has become central to power relations in society. By showing the possibilities of using knowledge creation to confront existing power relations, the study contributes to the development of a theory of adult education for social change for popular educators assisting the work of social movements.

### Theoretical Framework

Holford (1995) in "Why social movements matter: adult education theory, cognitive praxis and the creation of knowledge," explains the shift from the adult education movement of the 1930s where "Knowledge, freely available and undistorted by sectional interest, would lead to Truth" (p. 108) to the 1990s where "knowledge and reality are significantly constructed by social movements, and adult education is key in this process" (p. 109). For Holford, when adult educators help create a communicative culture they become central to the emergence of new knowledge in society and to social change itself. This framework builds upon the writings of adult education for social change and social movements of Finger (1989), Hart (1990) and Welton (1993).

Examples of knowledge construction are documented from the author's participation in the formation and work of the Atlantic Popular Educators Network. This network, which has existed since the early 1990's, recently conducted a regional meeting in November 2000 at which popular educators from the labour movement, literacy groups, church based social justice groups, community development organizations and popular cultural groups shared experience, techniques and analysis. This study shows how diverse forms of knowledge creation are possible.

### Formation of the Atlantic Popular Educators Network

This dynamic of knowledge construction to confront power has taken place in the meetings and workshops of the Atlantic Popular Educators Network (APEN). The network was formed first as a discussion group on popular education in the early 1990s, then revived in the middle 1990s as a local response to the organization of the North American Association for Popular Education. As a discussion group, the popular education group held a series of evening meetings for adult and popular educators to discuss pressing issues and to use innovative group techniques and processes. The group used a number of techniques including small groups, poetry, skits and visioning to articulate a focus and direction. After a large initial meeting of 40 adult educators, the group stabilized with between 10 and 15 for a series of monthly meetings. After a year and a half of meeting, participation fell off so the group did not continue.

By 1994, interest revived. A workshop in the fall of 1994 on popular education techniques attracted a wide variety of adult educators. In the winter of 1995, Michael Welton and Juan Tellez organized a weekend meeting at the Tatamagouche Centre, a church owned residential training centre in northern Nova Scotia, that attracted over 30 popular educators from throughout Atlantic Canada. There was a lot of interest in having a popular education focus to events at the P-7 or People's Summit, the parallel conference to the G-7 Summit in Halifax in June 1995.

After participation in the workshops, street theatre, and public meetings of the People's Summit, there was a decision to sponsor another workshop in Halifax in January, 1996. This workshop "We Can't Walk Alone: Sharing our struggle... building a network for the popular movement" was very successful with over 70 participants in attendance. The workshop was based on three key questions:

1. How did we get to the present stage: the predominant economic crisis and its impact in our organizations?
2. What is it that we want to accomplish in the near future and in the long run? Could we put our fears, needs and wants on the table?
3. How can we begin a process of building a movement for social transformation?

A wide variety of activists attended -- students, labour organizers, environmentalists, teachers, food bank workers, and peace activists. They were interested in a wide variety of educational and political activity, from study groups to lobbying to organizing. From the meeting two interest groups emerged, one to work on the Alternative Budget that was being released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Choices - a coalition for social justice; the second to form a green development group, a group that would develop strategies that support sustainable development.

After the workshop, both groups took a life of their own. The alternative budget working group, already supported by the coalition to oppose the CHST, went on to sponsor another major workshop on the creation and politics of alternative budgets. The environment group had a series of four or five meetings, trying to focus on the barriers and needs for incentives for sustainable businesses in Nova Scotia. The meetings included a presentation of the CalMeadow lending group and an examination of what type of support and direction there is for recycling, organic agriculture and sustainable businesses. However, after several meetings the direction for the group was not clear among the participants. Several wanted to form a non- profit foundation to help start and fund environmentally sustainable businesses. Others felt that this was too ambitious to begin with but the group should continue as a study and discussion group. By summer the group had stopped meeting.

Although the original plan was to have another conference in Tatamagouche in 1996, the organizing committee for the meeting could not agree on a format and a agenda. APEN was called upon to present a brief to the House of Commons Finance Committee and made three presentations, in the fall of 1997, 1998, and 1999. Many are interested in refocusing on organizing issues throughout the Atlantic region. The current revival of interest in APEN is inspired by the creation of the Canadian Network for Democratic Learning (CANDLE) and the need for popular educators from different constituencies -- labour, universities, community economic development agencies, churches, the black community, popular theatre and First Nations -- to meet and discuss common techniques, strategies and problems.

**Dramatic Tools for Radical Change**

In November 2000, over twenty-five popular educators from the labour, artistic, church and community movements met to share analysis, techniques and strategy at a two day APEN workshop titled "Dramatic Tools for Radical Change." As the Irondale Theatre Collective was one of the main sponsoring groups and resources, the focus for the workshop was using drama to analyze power, create narratives and express conflict and resolution. Irondale started the workshop with a collective presentation of power, drawn from the "Theatre of the oppressed" of Augusto Boal (1979) by using a table and chairs to envision power relations. Members of the group were invited to show how many forms of power relations they could represent. Participants visualized many relations of power, from equal relations with all the chairs around the table, to relations centered on one leader with one chair at a table with the remaining chairs in an audience, to extreme representations of domination with one chair on top of the table and the other chairs overturned, scattered on the floor.

These physical images of power were a fitting introduction to the next topic, the confrontation over fishing rights at the Burnt Church or the Esgenoopetitj First Nation. Gksidtanamoogk Otjoson, a Mi'kmaq leader and spiritual practioner, told of the history of the community and the background to the conflict. Since the area was settled by the Mi'kmaq people, they have fished for food and trade. These fishing and trading rights were recognized in the treaties signed by the British occupying force in the eighteen century. In the twentieth century the treaties were ignored and with the expansion of the inshore fishery a quota system excluded First Nations from the commercial fishery. However, a precedent setting supreme court decision of Sept 1999 ordered the Government of Canada to recognize the earlier treaties and negotiate with the First Nations for co-management of the resource. The Government's response, through the Department of Fisheries (DFO) was to unilaterally assign small quotas to each First Nation. Esgenoopetitj rejected DFO's quota and through their own management plan, which was reviewed and approved by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, regulated their own fishery. This lead to confrontations on the water between the Mi'kmaq fishermen and women and DFO officers in the Spring and Fall of 2000. The Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC) decided to train witnesses or observers to provide a means for the outside world to observe this confrontation over treaty fishing rights.

Rose Adams, one of the trainers from this witness project, described the five days of intensive training that the potential witnesses received. The witness project was based on ten years of experience with Project Accompaniment in providing witnesses for Guatemalan refugees returning to their land. The trainers worked with representatives of the Esgenoopetitj First Nation to plan the training process. They decided that potential observers should work with role plays that would uncover their assumptions about their relation to the First Nations, their role as an observer and their motivation for taking part in the project. Although the role plays were twenty to thirty minutes long, the debriefing would take from three to six hours, as new emotions, hidden motivations and unforeseen actions were uncovered by the role plays that surprised the participants.

The first day of the APEN workshop ended with remarks by Charlie Kennedy, an observer who went through the training and spent a week at Esgenoopetitj. He described the ambigous role of the witness, who is there to observe rather than intervene. He also described the result of the work on the witness, with video tape of DFO boats ramming and swamping First Nations fishermen and women, which was broadcast on television news across Canada and

around the world. Through the work of the project and training, the story of Mi'kmaq fishing rights and the violence of the DFO was told around the world.

The second day of the workshop included reports by two community activists, the first on community development of African Nova Scotian communities and the second on the use of literacy training by labour activists. Robert Upshaw told about African Nova Scotians celebrating their identity and taking charge of their education through political representation on school boards. Linda Wentzel, a labour leader, reported on how she used principles of plain language to make collective agreements understandable for workers and how this led to literacy training at the work site. The workshop ended with Irondale using the techniques of body sculpture to physically represent the political actors and agents at Burnt Church and how the actors would interact. Through this very participatory and physical form of drama, the group could think through the power dynamics of the situation and what alternative outcomes are possible.

**Current Prospects for APEN**

There are a number of different directions, institutional interests and tensions influencing the current organizing. The Tatamagouche Centre would like to organize regional training, analysis and reflection meetings at the Centre. They have organized a workshop on spirituality and adult education as vocation for May 2001. As well, they have proposed a popular education study tour to the Martin Luther King Popular Education Centre in Havana, Cuba for the winter of 2002. Local trade unionists and social movement activists have formed a Nova Scotia branch of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Nova Scotia Choices, a coalition for social justice. These coalitions both have active research and educational programs. There is substantial activity in community economic development and interest in a forum for sharing best practices and mobilization techniques. At the present time, most active organizers for APEN are from Halifax and Nova Scotia, but if the organization is to reflect its name, a much larger network of popular educators from throughout the Atlantic Provinces needs to be mobilized. A key issue is to provide a focus which will energize these organizing activities, rather than create another organization that requires funding, time, and energy.

The network is faced with a number of failed attempts to link adult and popular educators. In the early 1990s, the Continuous Learning Association of Nova Scotia (CLANS) disbanded, after thirty years of activity. Adult education associations in New Brunswick and Newfoundland have had similar experiences. The Atlantic Provinces Association for Continuing University Education, which was very active in the 1980s promoting distance education and innovative learning technologies in the region, has not been as active in the 1990s, restricted to a yearly meeting. For these organizations, all the work is carried out by volunteers, and these individuals are under more pressure to produce results for their organization and have less time and resources to devote to associations and networks.

However, there is strength in the structure of a network to respond to these concerns. Hall (2000) in "Global Civil Society: Theorizing a Changing World" states that networks form the means for organizing a global civil society. As he states:

"In his review of international networks, Jan Ruyssenaars refers to an early article by Marc Satin, who challenged 'the assumption that bureaucracy and hierarchy are the only viable forms of organisation for large numbers of people... [This] points to networks as another, and in many cases a more appropriate form of large-scale organisation... [with] networks growing more

vigorously at the extreme ends of power and influence. Networks are emerging both among the global elite and the powerless everywhere.' (p. 23)"

This vision of a network as organizational form can overcome many of the problems facing APEN. It can allow for multiple nodes of activity, with leadership emerging from different sectors and locations. It can create, through the use of e-mail and list serves, an effective communication mechanism throughout the Atlantic region where adult and popular educators, often geographically or institutionally isolated, can exchange information, share analysis and formulate strategies. And through the use of regional meetings and study tours, personal friendships can be built that will lead to increased collaboration and trust.

If through the network structure, APEN can be focused on activities for mutual benefit, so that both individuals and organizations benefit from the sharing, analysis and strategies, then APEN will receive support from across the region. This structure can provide an important "social imaginary" of how a society can operate without hierarchy, domination and exploitation.

**Concerns of APEN**

This description of the past and proposed activities of APEN shows the enabling function of a network that allows multiple forms and focuses of activity through different formats, locations and events. Although the future survival of APEN is not assured, the strategy of building communication between adult and popular educators working with labour, churches, schools and universities, literacy, First Nations, community economic development, theatre, visual and performing arts, and African Nova Scotian communities has received much expressed interest and support. Two difficulties have emerged preventing a stronger network, the need for energy and support for specific sector and coalition struggles and the lack of focus for a larger network.

The first concern is with competing priorities and multiple coalitions, organizations and structures to support. There is already a strong overlap in the "activists" involved in forming the CCPA-NS chapter, the Nova Scotia Choices (the provincial alternative budget), the local chapter of the Council of Canadians and APEN. Why does Nova Scotia need a fourth activist network if each one of these networks or coalitions is interested in supporting the same social movement issues? Although the same individuals may be involved in many or all of these organizations (as well as organizations from their own sector) each of the organizations exists for a separate purpose. The CCPA is a registered charity with a mandate for research and publication of alternative viewpoints. The Alternative Budget has a specific strategy for education and political discussion of government priorities and directions. The local chapter of the Council of Canadians provides an important link to the national group that is one of the most active organizers of the civil society opposition to the MAI, WTO, NAFTA, IMF, and World Bank. None of these coalitions focus on the specific educational processes of raising consciousness of issues, creating identities and forming strategies and analysis. This specific focus makes APEN both more limited in scope (not to change the world but to provide the techniques to strengthen democracy) and broader in appeal (these educational and organizing techniques come from different experiences with different social movement groups). The APEN workshops held from 1994 to 2000 have shown the energy created when the wide variety of experiences and techniques are shared among popular educators from different social movement locations. This more limited focus on sharing popular education methods with popular educators from different social movement groups gives a unique purpose and focus for APEN.

The vision of the Atlantic Popular Educators Network is that through the sharing of the experiences of using adult education for social change from diverse sectors and communities of practice, new forms of analysis, means of mobilizing and social images of the future will emerge. The hope is that by bringing together labour educators, literacy workers, theatre and artistic workers, African Canadian and First Nation educators and activists, environmental educators, feminist activists and community development workers to share the experience of their work and the methods that they have developed for raising consciousness, creating identities and mobilizing action, APEN will create new possibilities, new visions of the future. By exploring the new subjectivities that can be created through new conjunctures of interests, ideas and projects from active social movements, APEN can help create a more responsive, people centered world.

**Implications for Adult Education Theory and Practice:**

This analysis of the knowledge creation by popular educators working with social movement groups will enrich the understanding of the theory and practice of adult education for social change. In particular it documents the diverse methods that popular educators use to construct narrative, form identity and develop social visions. By showing how the sharing of these diverse methods of knowledge creation among popular educators leads to greater insight, more participatory analysis and more mobilizing actions, this study helps build the theory and practice of adult education for social change.

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# Community Sustainability and Lifelong Learning: Two Sides of Our Future Well-Being

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**Abstract:** The sustainability of both rural and urban communities is severely challenged by the impacts of corporate globalization. Lifelong learning, if built on the same foundational dimensions as a critical understanding of sustainability, can help to counter these impacts and contribute to individual and community well-being, not the corporate well-being of the quarterly report.

## Introduction

Community sustainability, in the global and local context, is a powerful issue in this age of globalization. Both communities of place and communities across space are, in different ways, increasingly susceptible to the impacts of the global market, with its ethic of money values over life values (McMurtry, 1998). Their fragile sustainability is challenged by a consumerist corporate culture that brooks no barriers to its spread and legitimacy, demands preferential treatment around the world and dictates that any form of education that does not serve the global market has no place in its new world order. This paper will concentrate on communities of place, exploring the issue of their sustainability and the role that lifelong learning can play in this fundamental aspect of survival.

Communities of place face almost overwhelming challenges to their sustainability in this age of corporate globalization. Transnational corporations impose their agenda on both rural and urban communities by means of policies that seek to lower corporate taxes and accommodate international flows of speculative capital, policies that seek to reduce public expenditures and privatise public services, and policies that seek to deregulate business and secure monopoly private property rights under law (The Globalism Project, 2001). Such policy initiatives not only impose a system of corporate rights on all aspects of our lives, but also work to forbid or supercede any policy initiatives that protect local, national, environmental, human, civil, labour or community rights. In other words, any policy that stands in the way of maximizing revenues for stockholders and top-level corporate executives is attacked and overturned. Protectionism has become a pariah term, while globalization has become a glossy expression that transnational corporations hide behind to do their dirty work.

The "casino capitalism" that characterizes corporate globalization increasingly casts both people and communities as losers in the now-famous "race to the bottom." Such exclusion undermines urban and rural communities, leaving them vulnerable to fragmentation and collapse (Sumner, 2000), and compromising their ability to learn their way out of unsustainable situations.

As the process by which individuals continue to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes over their learning lifetimes (Moreland and Lovett, 1997), lifelong learning is a familiar term in education circles, so much so that it is little more than a catch-phrase within the conventional discourse on education (Collins, 1997). Flabby with overuse and stretched to encompass a myriad of meanings, lifelong learning has lost much of its original direction and intent.

In addition, Holford (1997) contends that Western enthusiasm for lifelong learning is underpinned by assertions that increasing globalization of markets threatens national economic performance, even survival. He quotes a British report, which claims that a "culture of lifetime learning is crucial to sustaining ... international competitiveness" (p. 154). This view is echoed by Wilson (1999), who argues that

> the rhetoric of lifelong learning is now often aligned with various national economic efforts to enhance global competitiveness by drawing upon the 'resource' of 'flexible' or 'sculpted' workforces (p. 84).

Instead of contributing to open-ended exploration and greater awareness, lifelong learning has been harnessed to the needs of the global market, further corrupting its original intent. Lifelong learning now seduces people into becoming lifetime customers of pre-packaged learning products for sale in the global educational supermarkets that are already forming.

All in all, the forces of corporate globalization threaten to overwhelm both communities of place and lifelong learning, tying them to its market agenda that sees everyone and everything as a potential profit source. Faced with this problem, lifelong learning calls for educators to align themselves with the practical day-to-day interests of ordinary people (Collins, 1997). Such an alignment can help people challenge the forces of corporate globalization and enhance the communities they live in. Although the prime mover of recent lifelong learning policies internationally has been economic, Holford (1997) contends that cultural, social and political dimensions should also be significant. To this list, Orr (1992) would add the ecological dimension, noting that the ecological crisis represents, in large measure, a failure of education. All of these dimensions are essential parts of a lifelong learning for sustainability, one that can be part of community survival. How can this be accomplished?

## A Framework for Looking at Community Sustainability and Lifelong Learning

Community sustainability and lifelong learning are complex, layered issues that are difficult to understand. However, given the impacts of corporate globalization on both communities and lifelong learning, we must begin to engage with these issues on many levels.

### *Community Sustainability*

Sustainability can be understood as *the process of constructing and protecting the civil commons*. The civil commons is

> *society's organized and community-funded capacity of universally accessible resources to provide for the life preservation and growth of society's members and their environmental life-host*. The civil commons is, in other words, what people ensure together as a society to protect and further life, as distinct from money aggregates (McMurtry, 1998, p. 24).

Universal healthcare, public education, national parks, old age pensions and sewage systems are just some examples of the "conscious and co-operative human agency" (McMurtry 1999, 205) of the civil commons.

Conceptualizing sustainability as the process of constructing and protecting the civil commons is based on three building blocks: counter-hegemony, dialogue and life values.

***Counter-hegemony*** is a term used by Antonio Gramsci (1971) to denote the dialectical opposite of his seminal contribution to critical thinking - hegemony. Adult educator Peter Mayo (1999) understands hegemony as a social condition in which all aspects of social reality are dominated by or supportive of dominant groups. Counter-hegemony can be seen as challenging these dominant groups by the withdrawal of the 'spontaneous consent' that undergirds hegemony. ***Dialogue*** has gained new importance with the introduction of Jürgen Habermas' (1984, 1987) theory of communicative action. Dialogue based on communicative rationality is the basis of the two-way (or more) communication that can become an alternative to the top-down, one-way monologue promulgated by the "experts" of corporate globalization. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000), communicative action contains the possibility of dialogue aiming to arrive at mutual understanding and agreement. Such dialogue can "scrutinize existing dominance conditions so that well-founded positions can be achieved in ethical and political matters" (123). ***Life values*** have been brought to prominence by John McMurtry (1998) in his conceptualization of the life-code of value and the money-code of value. While in the latter, money is the "regulating objective of thought and action" (p. 299), in the former, life is the regulating objective. Decisions and actions made from the perspective of the life-code of value reproduce or increase the means of life - such as clean air, food and water - that preserve or extend life itself, defined by McMurtry as "organic movement, sentience and feeling, and thought" (p. 298). Choosing for life values can counter the money values that drive corporate globalization, exposing their limitations, especially with respect to their inability to recognize the importance of human and planetary life, except insofar as they can be used to maximize corporate profits.

These three building blocks - counter-hegemony, dialogue and life values - form the foundation of a critical understanding of sustainability as the process of constructing and protecting the civil commons. The outcome of this process of sustainability is increased well-being. This critical understanding of sustainability allies with the co-operative human construct of the civil commons, and adds a processual aspect that involves learning, evolves through negotiation, adapts to change, builds resilience, depends on feedback and thrives in participatory democracy. A dynamic process that is counter-hegemonic, dialogical and based in life values, this critical understanding of sustainability can challenge the hegemonic, monological, money-values foundation of corporate globalization, allowing communities to participate in their own sustainability through their construction and protection of the civil commons.

*Lifelong Learning and Sustainability*

In many ways, lifelong learning is at the heart of sustainability, when we understand sustainability as the process of constructing and protecting the civil commons. Hall (2000) explains the importance of learning itself:

> At its most basic, learning is the process by which we make sense or give meaning to our experiences. Learning is the name given to the most creative of human activities, becoming conscious of our movements through life and the movements of others and other processes. In short, our ability to survive, resist or prosper depends on our collective capacities to learn and upon our finding ways to share that learning with each other (p. 27).

In the face of the impacts of corporate globalization, our ability to survive, resist or prosper depends on our collective capacities to learn our way out of our current unsustainable state.

Constructing and protecting the civil commons provides a perfect opportunity for sharing that learning with each other, so we can survive the age of globalization, resist the hegemony of corporate values and prosper through building a collective life-oriented alternative.

While learning is crucial to the sustainability project, it is often neither recognized as important nor seen to be even happening. When examining the interactive processes in a rural community, Falk and Kilpatrick (2000, p. 97) "were struck by the fact that a great deal of learning was occurring, yet it went largely unrecognized." Such lack of recognition must be overcome if we are to place learning at the heart of the sustainability project. Following Serrano (2000, p. 93-4), we need to understand that "every social encounter anywhere, at any level or arena, is an opportunity for learning." Learning must become a way of life if we are to learn our way out.

Learning is at the heart of the sustainability project because sustainability is such an enormous challenge. To meet that challenge, Korten (1991-2, p. 188) argues that "we now need a revolution in thinking no less profound than the Copernican revolution." For just as the Copernican revolution represented a successful challenge to the entire system of ancient authority, the revolution in thinking we need must now "present a similar challenge to what have arguably become the most powerful institutions of contemporary authority - the institutions of transnational capital" (p. 188).

A number of authors recognize the implicit link between sustainability and learning. Cary (1992, p. 283) asserts that "the dynamic nature of sustainability involves a continuous learning experiment." Prugh et al (2000) advise that sustainability will require certain virtues, especially restraint and the ability to learn adaptively. Siebenhüner (2000) takes the link one step further, calling for sustainability as a social learning process, and arguing that

> Sustainability also requires the capability to solve complex problems with many variables and discontinuous developments, challenging human cognitive capabilities (p. 21).

In other words, learning for sustainability does not come naturally. It has to be fostered, achieved, worked toward and valorized. Like the air we breathe, it must become a basic necessity for survival. And just as lifelong learning is a lifelong human endeavour, sustainability must become a lifelong human undertaking. This sense of long-term commitment binds the two in a potent alliance that can challenge corporate globalization and result in individual and community well-being.

*Lifelong Learning Reconceptualized*

As currently understood, however, lifelong learning is incapable of countering the impacts of corporate globalization and allying with communities in their search for sustainability. In fact, it has probably contributed to unsustainability in its role of servant to the global market, putting corporate profitability before individual and community well-being. How can lifelong learning be re-conceptualized to serve community interests and promote sustainability?

The three building blocks of counter-hegemony, dialogue and life values that have formed a foundation for a critical understanding of sustainability can also form a foundation for a critical understanding of lifelong learning. The counter-hegemonic dimension gives lifelong learning a critical attitude, an element of suspicion that can analyse relations of domination and

learn to question them. The dialogical dimension invites community members to be active participants in their own lifelong learning through two-way (or more) communication. The life-values dimension provides lifelong learning with a values orientation that is directly opposed to the money values of the "learning for earning" ethos promoted by corporate globalization. Together, these three dimensions can work together to infuse lifelong learning with a critical, participatory, life-affirming vigour.

From this new perspective, lifelong learning can align with the idea of social learning. Social learning processes are central to the formation of active citizens (Welton 1997), who can counter the impacts of corporate globalization and work toward sustainability. Since sustainability involves an ongoing learning process among community members, an alliance with social learning is essential if lifelong learning is to contribute to community sustainability. At the same time, social learning is not without its own problems, from the point of view of sustainability. It has been defined in the community planning literature as "the process of framing issues, analyzing alternatives, and debating choices in the context of inclusive public deliberation" (Daniels and Walker, 1996, p. 73) . Such a definition, however, only promotes the dimension of dialogue, ignoring the other two dimensions. Serrano (2000) adds the dimension of counter-hegemony to the idea of social learning in the adult education literature when he contends that

> New forms of social learning - forms that challenge dominant learning practice and contribute to social transformation - are necessary in order to find our way out of the present global crisis of environment and development (p. 93).

Serrano goes on to advocate a kind of critical social learning, by which he means

> From a critical perspective the key concern here is whether or not such social learning is merely reinforcing existing unjust social arrangements or promoting transformation toward a more egalitarian and sustainable society (p. 94).

This critical social learning, however, still lacks a life-values dimension, which would help to guide adult educators and lifelong learners in their choices and actions. What we need is a kind of learning that can encompass all three dimensions and will contribute to community sustainability and future well-being. Lifelong learning can become that kind of learning if it encompasses these three dimensions and if it commits to working for community sustainability. Such a lifelong learning would involve a trialectical learning matrix - a web of dynamic interactions between the dimensions of dialogue, counter hegemony and life values. It would be a kind of learning that involved two-way (or more) communication, eschewed tacit consent as a way of engaging with the world and affirmed life values with every choice and action.

*Lifelong Learning Joins Globalization from Below*

Just as the corporate agenda has gone global, the resistance to it spreads from community to community, resulting in the phenomenon of globalization from below. Described as a worldwide movement of resistance, globalization from below has now established itself as a global opposition, representing the interests of people and the environment (Brecher et al 2000). Lifelong learning is faced with a fundamental choice: to side with the forces of globalization from above, promoting the corporate agenda and undermining the sustainability of rural and

urban communities, or to side with grass-roots solidarity of globalization from below, promoting the civil commons and working for community sustainability. In practice, such a choice is seldom so clearly defined, but putting it in starkly oppositional terms helps us to understand the implications of choices made and actions taken concerning lifelong learning. A strategic alliance with globalization from below can meet Collins' (1997) argument that lifelong learning calls for educators to align themselves with the need to foster civil society globally through an internationalist pedagogy. Such an internationalist pedagogy would involve a kind of lifelong learning for sustainability, engaging active local and global citizens, thus linking communities of place with communities of space in the quest for future well-being.

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# The Experience of Story Telling: Being Told Stories & Telling My Own

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**Abstract**: Cross-cultural, cross-generational, anecdotal experiences of a Caucasian, third generation Canadian female developing 'communicative competence' within an informal learning environment of a small First Nations reserve in British Columbia. Who is the learner? Developing active citizenship in a rural setting via a respectful lifeworld exchange.

As I sat this morning in meditation posture attempting to gather my thoughts and to waken my intuition in order to prepare my story, three ideas planted themselves in my consciousness: some things are meant to be; life is like a jumble sale; and "your spirit can precede you" (Williams, 1993). Each of these ruminations apply to the following slice of my journey during the years from 1980 to 1993.

*The Dream:*

One night sometime in 1985 I awoke from a vivid experience which I remember to this day. (It did not resound with me until some time later, perhaps two or three years in fact.) The dream was about me standing with an elderly man with long, lank, grey hair, on a wooden sidewalk, beside a dirt road. There were dusty children all around. The old man's eyes were very clear and sparkling. We sat down on the wooden sidewalk, and he spoke to me about his children. I called him Grandfather Joe in my dream, because somehow I knew that was his name. He smiled and looked gently out at the unconcerned youngsters playing in the road. He looked at me with his kindly eyes and spoke to me. He asked me to look after his children. He explained a few things which I did not grasp nor remember. He asked me again to help his children. They were playing and did not appear to need help. I questioned him about this strange request. He quietly smiled with his eyes. I woke up. I remembered the dream for the next few days, and had a sense of pleasant peace about me. I forgot the dream for a long time.

*The Beginning:*

My husband, Brian, and I, having both been old hippies, and creating a life with each other in the early 1980's, determined to 'go back to the land' in order to raise our son, in a wholesome, healthy environment, away from the 'me generation' which was markedly rising out of the ashes of the disco era. All was dependent upon Brian's ability to find relocation via his employer, B.C. Tel. After much searching we discovered a 115 acre ranch nestled in a mountainous valley forty-five minutes drive north and east of Pemberton, near the idyllically named community of Devine. In order to reach this property, one must follow Highway 99 from North Vancouver, past Squamish and Whistler. When you arrive at Pemberton, you head towards Lillooet, but continue driving right through the Mount Currie (Lil'Wat) Indian reserve. The first time I drove through the reserve land, I burst into tears. I was not ready for the state of poverty, and dilapidated housing which met my eyes (Joseph, Jean, Brooks, 1991). With two female partners, (who never really settled in the place, and who years later eventually sold their half of the land to a multinational conglomerate), we bought the property and moved into a six hundred square foot cabin with a gravity fed water system, heated with a wood stove, and shared with

wild life (pack rats). We discovered over the years, that we were situated on traditional native territory when we found an arrowhead in our broccoli garden, and a spearhead under our lilac trees.

Brian became the telephone man for the Pemberton district (640 square miles) and I became a rancher. We were unique in the tiny white community of loggers, hunters, farmers and heavy equipment operators, because we are vegetarian and because Brian had a steady job. This set us apart, and we found that the romantic ideal of barn raising and quilting parties never materialized for us. As we raised our son, and refurbished buildings on the property, I felt a need for more creativity and employment-based purpose in my life. In addition, over the years, I fought many personal environmental battles over toxic spray programs directed at our land and the regional district. Pitted against Forestry, Highways, and B.C. Rail, I began to meet other community members who brought me into contact with several of the local First Nations bands. We were fighting the same battles in some instances, and this experience led to my meeting people from the Samahquam Band south of Lillooet Lake, and the Lytton Band over the Cayoose Mountain range. I had already been interacting with members of our local Anderson Lake (N'Quatqua) Band whose reserve lands are intersected by the main road. For locals to access mail (which is delivered by the daily Bud car of B.C. Rail) and the only 'corner' grocery store available within a forty-five minute drive, we had to drive through the center of the reserve (McIntosh, 1989).

By 1985, after several adventurous attempts to make money for myself, and our farm, from selling eggs, flagging for the highways department, and having a roadside stall, I phoned the Squamish office of Social Services which regulated our area. I wanted to inquire about the possibility of using some of my previous employment skills which had been as a Courtworker for the John Howard Society in Vancouver, a Family Support Worker for the Ministry of the Attorney General in Delta, and as a Child and Youth Worker for a non-profit society in Burnaby. Not long after that phone call, I was offered a short term, eight hour per week contract to work with a 12 year old native boy living at home in our local Anderson Lake Band. At approximately the same time, due to my environmental battles, I was asked to sit on the Board of Directors for the Stein Rediscovery Program that was underway with the Lytton Band and the Mount Currie Band in the Stein Valley. This program's mandate was to integrate both native and non-native children from rural and urban areas by having ten-day hiking and camping experiences within the shared traditional territories of these two First Nations.

*The Middle (and the Best):*

I carried on with the Stein Rediscovery program over three year or four years, and proudly spoke at the first Stein gathering (at the top of the mountain) by the headwaters of the Stein River in the rain, about the environmental fight for resource protection from the provincial government's mandates and five year plans. Over the next few years I sat on the Board and attended the following three years of Stein gatherings - one in Lytton when Ruby Dunstan was Chief, one at the mouth of the Stein River where it joins the Fraser, and one in Mount Currie when the headliners were actor Martin Sheen and singer Ian Tyson (and the Board Members had to pay to get in according to the Mount Currie Band Council).

My work with the young man from the Anderson Lake Band was challenging, fun, and somewhat successful for both of us. My contract was extended, and I also became his home school tutor at one point when he was suspended from grade seven for sexual harassment, for snapping a girl's bra strap. I developed a tentative relationship with his mother, younger

brother, and father (who had suffered brain damage from a logging accident). Both his parents were recovering alcoholics, and in small bits, I was able to piece together some of the early trauma which he and his younger brother had lived through. This was the beginning of my learnings about native culture, devastation, assimilation, abuse, and poverty issues.

In November of that year, while I was dropping my son off at the one-room schoolhouse halfway between our farm and band lands, I sat on the school steps in conversation with the teacher and the band education coordinator. We spoke about the work I was doing with the young fellow from the reserve, and the positive response the Band had received (unbeknownst to me) from the nearest native social worker in the Tribal Council (in Lillooet). The band school coordinator mentioned that the Anderson Lake Band Council were considering taking over their own social services program and were speculating on how to achieve this and who could handle it. Even though they could not identify a band member who would be able to fill the position, this was a program the Chief and Council wanted developed because it was difficult for most of the band members to get to Lillooet for their welfare checks, for drug and alcohol counseling, and because of the lack of local services to Anderson Lake. He said that they might be looking for someone off reserve if necessary. The trip to Lillooet was arduous, usually undertaken by a daylong train journey, or sometimes by a two-hour tortuous car ride over the back-country Duffy Lake road, which was unpaved, and often closed due to rock or snow slides. I cautiously mentioned that I would be extremely interested in the position if they should decide that a non-native would be considered, and left it at that. Three months later, in February of 1986 I received a phone call out of the blue, from the Chief of the Anderson Lake Band asking me if I would be interested in creating a social development program for the reserve. Absolutely!! I was asked to come down to the Band Office and meet with the Chief and Band Manager to discuss the prospect. I had no idea of the immediate nature of their request, and was surprised when they handed me two large policy binders from the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA as it was called at that time) and asked me to go home and read them. I was to begin March 1st, 1986 during the last month of the '85-'86 fiscal budget, so that by April 1st everything would be in place to start up the new program. This truly was the beginning of a whole new way of life for me, and looking back in time, I can see that my whole paradigm of existence was about to explode with new information, new cultural awareness, new friends, and new purpose.

The creation of the social development program for the N'Quatqua Band went very smoothly. The Chief and the Band Manager accepted me without hesitation and postulated that I was capable of the demands. I lived up to their expectations, and spent many extra hours creating a program of accountability and responsiveness. (I was employed half-time.) I listened to stories, I asked questions, and watched carefully (Absolon, 1991). I admit that I was slightly intimidated and also naive enough to not comprehend the magnitude of responsibility that I had shouldered.

This Chief - *my* Chief - had been elected by the Band, even though he was the son of a man who held the title of Hereditary Chief. His father, the Hereditary Chief, would come into the Band Office several times a week for an excuse to get out of the house, and stretch his aging bones. He appeared very old, but was probably only in his 70's at that time. His wife was suffering from some form of dementia, and he liked to come and sit in the Band Office to watch life and to tell stories. My Chief, too, was a story teller, and I learned many aspects of the Band's history and politics by hearing these stories during coffee breaks from our regular work. I learned how the Band came to be where it is. The land was never a permanent settlement. It was a gathering place, a sacred place for the neighbouring Nations, until one day the Indian

Agent declared it to be a reserve, and the people who happened to be there at the time, now had to live there. This relates to why the three main family lineages on reserve, do not always see eye to eye. They have come from different places, and see things in their own way. I learned how some of the people got their names. These were based on the white man's need to register people and send people to their own reserve, or off reserve. One woman had children by a French trader, and hid in the bush near another community called Bridge River. She came to this area when she could sneak away to be with her family, when the Indian Agent was not present. The white Agent returned. He could not tell who had been there before, so she stayed, and he gave her the name of the French man that he thought had fathered her children. I learned that N'Quatqua means the place of the rocks, because of two large rocks down by the lake. I learned that the animal totem for N'Quatqua is the bear, and I thought back to the fact that I have in my possession a set of Grizzly claws which I had discovered in our house in Vancouver, when we had purchased it from an elderly gentleman. I learned how the town of Mission got its name. The Anderson Lake Band had presented the local missionaries with over 100 acres of land on which to build a school. The missionaries/priests had taken the land, sold it to the railway, and built their school down in the lower mainland near the Fraser River, in a community which they then named Mission. Once again the inherent trust in the Catholic church was abused. The Band is presently negotiating to have that land reinstated, as a result of this breach of trust.

Another elder, would, over several years, also tell me stories when I went to visit him. He was suffering terribly from rheumatism and diabetes and had trouble walking. All too rarely, I would stop by his house to sit and talk. It was difficult for me to understand him because English was his second language and he was not fully articulate in it. There was no way that I could speak the language of the Interior Salish which was the mother tongue of these people I was living with. He told me about the language of "Chinook". This is a trading language developed by the Natives, the white traders, and the missionaries. It was a combination of English, French, pidgin English, and various Native dialects.

A female elder, whom I had met several years before, because I had given her rides to the train, or home from the store, when I saw her trudging along the dirt road, loaded with a knapsack, gave me her blessing when I took my position as social worker. She had taught me about dried salmon. She pressed some into my hands on several occasions, and told me not many "Shama" (white people) liked their wind-and-smoke dried salmon. I loved it and we became good friends. (Band members would laugh at me during gatherings when I would eat their "Tsuan" - a fishy soup made from the dried/smoked salmon strips.) It was she who first told me of the horrors of residential school - of attending for only three years when she was about 9, 10, and 11. She told me how they punished her for speaking the only language that she knew - her own. When she didn't speak English they gave her only bread and water. She had to stand facing the wall in her slip for days on end. She was cold, she was lonely, and there was no one to help her. She ran away at age 12. She was in her 60's when she told me these events, and I had not begun working with the band yet. I was aghast and horrified. When my own father came to visit, we picked her up on the road with her knapsack, and drove her to the train station. She was taking dried salmon to Lillooet relatives, and she gave some to my father, who also liked it very much. As we drove home alone, I told him her stories. He too could not believe such things happened in Canada but thankfully, did not dispute the truth of them, nor question her sanity.

After several months I was told by one shy young mother, that I had not yet visited the elders. At first I did not understand. But she explained to me that I had not gone to spend time

with her grandmother. I realized that not only was I in breach of protocol, but that I may have looked like I was disparaging their family. I had not really thought about visiting because I had not been invited, and when I did consider it, my fear was one of possible rejection as an outsider. I made a house call to the young woman's grandmother who was the matriarch of that family. I did not know what to expect and the visit felt very formal for my 'white' view of the location - being out in the country. Looking back now, I may have tried to buy my way into favour. She was in her 60's and was sweeping the floor as she had done all her life. Her arthritis hurt and she also looked after an adult son (the father of the young mother) who was confined to a wheel chair. We had some small talk. It was somewhat stilted. I came up with the idea of obtaining a vacuum cleaner for her in my role as social worker, and I left on that note. I never really felt that I had been accepted by this woman. I did not know how to prove myself to her.

As I tell my story, I realize that all these people - the Band administrator, the Hereditary Chief, his wife, my Tsuan provider, my 'Chinook' storyteller, and my vacuum cleaner recipient - all of them, are now gone. It hurts to think that I have not honoured them with words until now. They are part me, part of who I am. I have them to thank for how I now see the world.

New housing was being offered by DIA for the first time in years. Five families had been chosen, (before I became involved), to select an architectural design from several offered, and to choose everything from paint colours, to flooring, to cabinetry, to appliances. In a small band of about one hundred and fifty people, those houses were a very big deal. Many of the local 'white' families were jealous, and it was not until I realized very clearly how desperately this housing was needed that I myself did not have a pang of envy. That first month of work I found that more than one family had three generations, up to 17 people living under one roof, with worn linoleum flooring, unsafe wood stoves, and outhouses. Over the years more housing sprang up, and some families were able to return home in part due to Bill C-31. This bill attempted to redress Native women who had lost their Native status by marrying white men. The extra funds under that Bill were spent exclusively on those newly returned members while I was their social worker. A visiting 'dignitary' from the housing department of DIA took me aside during an inspection and asked for a report on the difference the new housing was making for families. I made an off-the-cuff remark, with a tinge of irony, because of my workload, that perhaps he was referring to something akin to a Master's thesis. He took me seriously and the request was dropped.

Some of the most memorable impressions of working, living, and learning on reserve are:

- Being accepted by the Lillooet Tribal Council, as the only non-native social worker within the eleven bands, and having my place be sanctioned due to respect to 'my' Chief.
- The giddy excitement of the Band females when Evan Adams, the native actor, came to put on a play about alcohol and sexuality, and getting our pictures taken with him.
- The pow wows and gatherings that began with the desire of one young teenaged girl who went after the Indian Princess title (much as I was against beauty pageants); how we managed to squeeze out some development money to purchase a three-foot diameter drum; the upsurge of pride in dancing, and creating regalia for the youth of the band.
- The funerals for those who passed on, the drum beat, the three day watches around the fire, the coffin in the living room, the community processional, the lowering of the caskets, my fighting with funeral homes over inflated costs and refusing to pay the bill until the price came down.
- The trauma of nine suicide attempts in one year with two of them being 'successful'.
- The lack of employment and the creation of several development corporations.

- Local oppression of white employers/settlers viewing all natives the same (Adams, 1975)
- The sweat lodge, when the one fellow who kept his traditional spiritual ways, invited myself and the Australian health nurse, as the first women and the first non-natives into his sweat.
- Being helicoptered into the traditional territory along with the Chief and 8 teenagers, to hike the mountains and peaks to let them see where their ancestors proudly stood, and the danger of an electrical storm in the helicopter on our return to the Band several days later.
- The women's group which resulted in healing and strengthening the women to the point of frightening the men with their clarity and presence. Arranging for them to attend the Justice Institute's course entitled Native Women and Healing - the only Band to attend. I hang the picture of that experience on the wall of every office I have had since that time.
- The trigger of realization in 1987 that a person I was working with had the same name as the man in my dream from years before.
- The Easter egg hunt that I planned for all the children, when I hid the eggs and no one showed up. They had not called me in the middle of the night to "clean up the blood" when a party got out of control and someone blew his brains out. They said they wanted to spare me, and have recently repeated this reason, but at that time I didn't know if they did not call because I was not really one of the Band.
- My return after many years to my friend's funeral, October, 1999 - the first traditional native styled funeral to be held within the Tribal Council. They allowed me to hold the eagle feather, and to speak about the sharing and caring which they taught me, and which I hopefully carry back into my own white world's culture. The second Chief whom I served under, took me aside and gave me great praise and credit for being "the kind of social worker that we need, who gets involved with the community, and who is there for the people when they need help." This was a great weight off my heart which I had carried for 10 years fearing I had not measured up.

*The End (perhaps):*

My 'tour of duty' ended abruptly during the summer of the fifth fiscal budget with which I was involved. The sudden climax to this part of my life was gut-wrenching and it has taken this long to place perspective around it. But just as I mentioned at the beginning of this story, some things are meant to be - both beginnings and endings. The 'jumble sale' of visions of events and individual faces which have flashed before my eyes as I have written this paper has renewed my faith and overwhelmed me with gratitude. My spirit did precede me with this story, with my dream experience, and after this story it preceded me again so that I was able to move on both emotionally and physically, but for the better from these experiences.

I thought when I was about to write this paper, that I would have to dwell upon the domestic violence that I encountered, the deaths due to alcohol, the educational lapses, the confused parenting over the lack of role models and abuse associated with residential schools, or the sad departure of my own place under a third Chief who had other focuses for his future. This has not been the case, and the paper has written itself. It has been a story worth telling, of a wonderful community sitting precariously between the Interior Salish (most bands of the Lillooet Tribal Council), and the Coast Salish of which Mount Currie belongs, although part of the Lillooet Tribal Council. (The land just past our ranch has a large footprint with 6 toes in a rock, which demarcates the Coast and Interior Salish territories.) I have recently heard that the present Chief has pulled out of treaty and land use negotiations, based on a referendum, until clarity is achieved. The voice of the people is being listened to. This community allowed me to

have a wonderful home, and I thank them for that. If I am permitted to borrow a phrase, "all my relations."

# Roundtable Submissions:

## Spaces for Community Development: Lost and Found
## A Round Table Discussion

Pramila Aggarwal, Bill Fallis and Bob Lucker

This roundtable will discuss the dialectic of repressed and reborn community development, and education for citizenship in community based agencies in Toronto. What new forms does social action take? Where are the new locations? What can we learn from *our* location on this contested periphery? Have we been so trapped by our ideological positions that we have not been able to recognize new and creative forms of community expression?

The spaces for community development are shrinking. Many community agencies only provide minimal support for active community participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of agency programs. We are concerned about this loss of a more participatory style of engagement that includes participants as active partners with staff in the creation of programs. Time and again adult educators have shown that community members are empowered by involvement. Participation often creates a sense of ownership, belonging and political awareness.

However the neo-liberal environment has severely curtailed the possibilities for community agencies to be actively involved in education for citizenship. These agencies are compelled to shift from a process orientation to an outcomes-based delivery model. Outcomes-based models are easier to "quantify" and are thought to be more accountable. An empowered citizenry is not a priority. A case in point is a certain shelter for abused women. It had a major portion of its funding withdrawn on the basis that it was unable to secure employment for its residents. All the other work the agency does to empower and prepare the residents is unrecognized, devalued and unfunded.

Needless to say this drives adult education for citizenship, advocacy and community development to the precarious margins of the agencies' time, space and priorities. We are facing an intensified culture of insecurity and an attendant compliance with regulatory processes that smother initiatives meant to empower people as citizens.

None the less, hopeful initiatives reappear constantly in varied forms in our communities. We can be encouraged by the efforts and struggles of marginalized people across the world. They don't just comply. They create something new. Valuable community projects may be shut down, but people regroup, relocate and reorganize in some new place and form.

An example of a new form of community development is the Toronto Dollar project. This volunteer-driven effort created a "local currency" (printed by the Canadian Bank Note Company) that circulates like "real money" in the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood in Toronto. Ten cents on every dollar spent goes to a community trust fund that supports neighbourhood projects. These projects emphasize services, programs for youth, and they create paid work for very low income people trying to survive. Uniquely, honouraria given (in Toronto Dollars) to people on social assistance, recognizing their volunteer work contributions to local community services, are not considered "income" and are not subject to clawback by welfare. This arrangement is a product of the social imagination, commitment and political skill of the Toronto Dollar's volunteers.

Another example of community development in the Toronto area is the revitalization of an anti-poverty organization. It has been in operation for twenty-five years and has undergone several incarnations and near closure throughout its history. However, today, it has re-established itself in the community with renewed vigor and mission. From a nondescript office, the staff, volunteers and board members have reconnected with the community; a community which is very diverse in its ethnicity and very homogeneous in its poverty. The food bank, the most central service, has now become a place for members of the community to browse through newspapers, have a coffee, or have a hot meal. These meals are prepared by volunteers from the community, who may also be recipients of the services of the agency. A kitchen garden in a nearby community park has provided the opportunity for community members to grow what they like to eat, teach others to garden, and finally, take pride in their produce. The decisions as to what to grow, what to sell, what to cook, and how to work together are made by the citizens of this neighbourhood. We see in this agency many elements of effective community development and a strong possibility for social cohesion in hard times.

The third example focuses on a medium for community development, the internet. This medium has created a new form of social relations for our information age. How we obtain, share and respond to information has been radically altered by the increasing number of internet users and the improved capabilities of internet services. Applications of this medium for community development would include e-mail petitions, project development, strategy sessions, the sharing of community information and chat room discussions. As an example of a specific site, Greenpeace at <www.greenpeace.org> has created a website that includes both information and the opportunity to join their cyberactivist group. This group provides opportunities to participate in on-line discussions and to help with Greenpeace campaigns.

Spaces for community development continue to be lost and found, in the ebb and flow of community life. Adult educators need to seek out these new spaces and foster their growth into new expressions of social action.

# Academic Adult Education and the Vocation of Intellectual Work: Conditions and Quandaries

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**Abstract:** The vocation of intellectual work involves a commitment to principles and practices of critical thought and self-reflection which are frequently espoused in the academic adult education literature. However, the increasing corporatization and technicization of academic life creates conditions where the pursuit of this vocation is pushed to the margins in the rush to serve the perceived needs and dictates of the global economy.

In his book *Representations of the intellectual*, Edward Said (1994) uses the term "vocation" to characterize the meaning and value of intellectual work. The essence of the intellectual vocation, Said claims, is to ask hard questions about the nature of truth, whose truth, and how to speak the truth in the face of power. He questions, however, the extent to which this vocation can be fulfilled in institutions such as universities which are increasingly shaped by the idiom and interests of the marketplace, and which offer numerous inducements for shirking the rigours of truth-speaking in favour of the rewards of "accommodation, yea-saying, settling in" (p. 63).

The purpose of this paper is to use Said's view of the vocation of intellectual work as a backdrop for examining current conditions and quandaries within adult education, in the context of contemporary academic life. As university professors, students, and practitioners of adult education, how do we -- or ought we -- see our intellectual work as a vocation, in the sense that Said describes? How does academia help to support this vocational vision? How does it, conversely, impose impediments and temptations that might hinder or cloud that vision?

## Adult Education and the Vocation of Intellectual Work

The first question to consider is the extent to which adult education fits within the framework of intellectual work that Said puts forward. On the one hand, the idea of intellectual work has elitist connotations that, on the surface, do not sit well with adult education's more populist and pragmatic history (Selman, Selman, Cooke & Dampier, 1998). On the other hand, however, there is much within the adult education literature on critical theory, transformative learning, and social change that resonates with Said's view that the purpose of intellectual work is to question and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about reality embedded within the dominant worldview (Briton, 1996; Welton, 1995; Usher, Bryant & Johnston, 1997).

There are also parallels between Said's perspective on the vocation of intellectual work and Michael Collins' (1991) discussion of adult education as a vocation. Collins describes vocation as a thoughtful commitment to ethical practice, involving both a social vision of practice as a contribution to the good of all, and an ongoing critical, self-reflective engagement with questions about which (and whose) good is embedded within the accepted conventions and truths of the day. For Collins, as for Said, the meaning of vocation is intended to convey a commitment to social justice, and to ongoing critical scrutiny, moral questioning, and dissent against the reified injustices entrenched within the status quo. From this view, intellectual work is a central feature of adult education as a critical practice. The vocation of intellectual work, in

adult education and elsewhere, is not about perpetuating intellectual elitism but fostering vigilant self-examination and social criticism as essential features of a dynamic, informed and democratic public life.

## The Academic Context

The second question addressed in this paper concerns the relevance of the intellectual vocation to the academic context of adult education, and, indeed, to the broader context of academic life more generally. A natural assumption about academia is that one of its primary roles in society is the creation of knowledge through the cultivation of critical reason -- the assumption being, in other words, that the intellectual and academic vocation are one. However, as noted above, Said, among others (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Readings, 1996) argues that public institutions such as universities are, increasingly, so much under the sway of economic and corporate interests that they have become a habitat more for "hired agents of the information industry" (Said, 1994, p. 20) than for independent moral and critical thinkers. Within adult education, Collins (1991) is similarly critical of the "fixation on technique and efficiency" (p. 2) that dominates the scene in adult and higher education contexts alike, and which serves to perpetuate and shore up dominant stereotypes and interests rather than to rigourously examine and challenge them. From this perspective, many features of the academic context of adult education run the risk of impeding rather than fostering its vocational possibilities.

For Said, the principal bureaucratic threat to the intellectual vocation lies in the lure of advancement, entrenchment, and specialization, and the preoccupations that go along with having "offices to protect [and] territory to consolidate and guard" (p. xviii). For Collins, it is the one-dimensional conception of knowledge and practice that goes along with an obsession with technical expertise at the expense of broader philosophical and moral considerations. Such challenges to vocational work are not just abstract concerns but are often manifested within the everyday work environment of academic life. In a recent issue of the *CAUT Bulletin*, Heather Menzies and Janice Newson (2001) state that the "core values of academics' vocation are under siege" (A3) because of the growing proliferation of distance technology which is creating conditions where many people are over-extended and run of their feet. What are the effects,"they wonder, "not just on our mental and physical health but on our ability to think for ourselves, to know our own minds, and to act based on what we think is important?" (Menzies and Newson, 2001, A3). Likewise, in a recent discussion of Einstein's contributions to science, John Polanyi (2000) states that Einstein would likely not thrive in the modern Canadian academy because his work does not fit within the bureaucratic parameters of federal research funding. Although the vocation of intellectual work is to critically scrutinize such trends and bandwagons, the demands of academic life lean instead towards urging us to jump aboard and go along for the ride.

## Considerations

The purpose of this paper is not to argue for the wholesale dismantling of universities or to assert that we, as adult educators in academia, would be better off dumping our jobs and studies, and taking to the ramparts or taking up gardening. Rather, my main aim is to engage in the kind of intellectual work our jobs and studies beckon us to, by opening a space for reflection on the everyday conditions of academic life, in order to critically examine those conditions, and perhaps begin to identify the possibilities for living and working otherwise.

**References available at** www.stfx.ca/people/adulted/

## Facilitating More Servant Leadership & Stewardship

Kathleen Dodman-Kevany

> To the world, you may just be somebody... but to somebody, you may just be the world. Non nobis solum sed toti mundo nati." "Not for ourselves, but for the whole world were we born".
>
> *The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts Motto**

### The Catalyst

Social psychologists warn of the growth of a kind of programmed indifference in large segments of the populace. Others speak of a developing "culture of narcissism", that is, the cultivation of private happiness at the expense of public responsibility. A dominant, driving force behind this is 'consumerism'. "We have seen so much in society, how generations emulate those they look up to. Unfortunately they have too few good ones, and more they are tough, plastic, looking good and making a lot of money, models. Not the caliber on which to build a healthy society" (a field study participant, 2001). Stewards may be the alchemists required in these dynamic and troubling times. It is like a relic found in the attic, amoung less valuable items. Today, it is worth more than its original value (Levan, 1998). Stewardship refers to the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of a community, of the environment, of an institution, or of one's gifts of time, treasure and talent. Stewardship involves graciously receiving gifts, responsibly tending to those gifts, lovingly sharing them, and returning them with increase" (Clements, 1997).

The questions raised in these times of daunting international injustices, swelling person stress require insightful answers. The questions posed by Robert Greenleaf (1977) are vital to consider today. 'How do persons who provide service grow as persons; and how do they enable those being served to become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society: will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived?' Other questions require consideration. 'Are we isolated individuals, or do we each live as a part of relationships? Is moral self-knowledge necessary for personal growth? Can any society prosper or endure without developing a basic sense of duty and responsibility amoung its members? How does a pluralistic society inspire its members to share a sense of duty to become active servant leaders and responsible stewards? Which educational methods would be most instrumental?

### Social Responsibility

A study participant poignantly stated, "While we have groups like the United Way, who do good work, they also take away from the stewardship everyone should be feeling. They just think there is this service, it should be taken care of, it is now not my problem. Here's my money now go and deal with it. We are abdicating stewardship to service groups and hoping the work is done." Greenleaf said that the North American cultures are not creating more servant leaders. We lull ourselves into believing it is being done. "It is not being done" (Greenleaf, 1977). "I have been using my gifts and teaching stewardship throughout the United States and Canada for 20 years; I share with others my experience, knowledge and gifts without fees. I have found that there is a tremendous hunger for God but people don't know how" (a field study participant, 2000).

The forces for good and evil in the world are propelled by the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of individual beings. What happens to our values, and therefore to the quality of our civilization in the future, will be shaped by the conceptions of individuals. Stewardship research provides creative techniques to help each person develop his or her potential as an individual and as a contributing, responsible member of society who will: think clearly, feel deeply, and act wisely. Offering techniques that prompt individuals to act on their values and to use their time, treasure and talent adds benefit also to the broader community. Increased human well being depends on utilizing the imaginations and powers of many more people and on building networks that strengthen human willingness to more actively care for one another.

**Cooperative Inquiry Approach**

Many report that more intelligent humane, spiritual and ecological approaches to the world's challenges are needed (Theobald, 1997; Greenleaf, 1977; Fox, 1995). This increased 'conscientizacion' and a growing awareness that human well being can be improved through self-discipline that produces more creativity and less destructiveness. Cooperative, multi-disciplinary approaches including values of wholeness, trust, valuing diversity, interdependence and interconnectedness, and honesty are needed. This is based on the assumption that the universe is made up of wholes within wholes, and it is the human element, which merely overlooks the connection of everything to everything else. This "interconnectedness of reality" (Miller, 1998) is a value needed to replace fragmentation, divisiveness, and competition. Through collaboration, conscious, caring and capable individuals will replace destructive ways with healthier lifestyles that create more conscientious communities.

Those who facilitate giving of oneself and being of service to others help to create wholeness. Wholesomeness is achieved best through serving. Management specialists say that stewardship is the choice for service and suggest that humans serve best through partnerships, rather than patriarchy. "Stewardship is the choice for service. A culture of dependency is the antithesis of stewardship, and so an empowerment philosophy and practice become essential" (Block, 1993). Creating a stewardship culture requires including people in meaningful ways and ensuring the development of needed skills. Facilitating more stewardship would inspire people to share their abilities, returning to them more satisfaction and accomplishment while also building more capable and caring communities. A participant put it this way, "Everything we have is to share, we have an obligation to care. We are created to be a community of helpers." But people are longing for education on how to do this.

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# The Master's Tools: Critical Adult Learning in a Web-based Adult Education Course

Budd L. Hall and Maria Turner

It was the late Audre Lorde who said that, "The master's tools will never be used to dismantle the master's house" (1970) in reference to the importance of critical feminist scholars working from new frameworks and in new ways. This paper explores challenges and opportunities for critical adult learning within a framework of web-based adult education instruction. This paper reports in a dialogic manner on the experiences of two experienced and critical adult educators. One adult educator was an instructor and the other was a participant in a web-based on-line adult education course during the months of September – December, 2000. The paper responds to some of the following questions: How are relations of power between the instructor and the participants facilitated or challenged? What are the limits or opportunities for challenging or problematizing learning related to issues such as gender, race, class or sexuality? What is the nature of the learning community or communities created within the context of an on-line course? If a goal of critical adult education is to problematize existing power relations in adult learning contexts, to what degree does the on-line course make this more likely, less likely or about the same? What changes might be made in course software such as Web Knowledge Forum to make it more supportive of critical adult learning possibilities?

The course under examination is a foundational course at a major Ontario university. The teaching of this course on-line in September of 2000 marked the first time that the course had been offered in a distance mode. The course was supported within a WebKF framework in which has been based on a metaphor of how a scholarly community ideally works. Students were located between Manitoba and Nova Scotia, with most of them in Ontario outside of Toronto. This research builds on the Davie et al paper entitled "Universities, Communities, and Site Building: Exploring Three Online Learning Systems (Virtual University, WebKF and Mookti)". [1] The paper is further informed by theories and models of web course management as elaborated in the Bruce Mann edited volume coming out of Memorial University experience and reporting on experience in Canada, the United States and Australia.[2]

On-line learners are typically part-time learners. Part-time learners are an interesting group to begin with because they fit formal academic studies into already full lives. While graduate studies demand commitment at the best of times, the commitments required of part-time learners is enormous. Sustaining interest in a demanding graduate programme to be completed at the end of a day's work is challenging. Sustaining that interest over an eight or so year period requires great persistence as well. On-line learning contributes to sustaining the commitment in an interesting way. The opportunity to attend class is available at any time. This means one can engage in active learning much more frequently than if one attends class once a week. It is both demanding and exciting. When one adds the challenge of trying to problematize local-global as well as personal-political expressions of daily teaching and learning, the stimulation is multiplied.

[1] Davie et all 1998 http://noisey.oise.utoronto.ca/projcool/conferences/EC0098.htm

[2] Man, Bruce 2000 *Perspectives in Web Course Management* Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press

# From Marginalized to Mainstream: Different Stories, Similar Needs Encounters with Diverse Groups in the Practice of Adult Education

Kate Briscoe (Concordia University)
Linda Furlini and Mary Jo Gascon (McGill University)
Cheryl Jeffs (University of British Columbia)

**Abstract:** This roundtable will explore the practice of adult education within four separate groups of learners: functioning adult schizophrenics; informal caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's; women with rheumatoid arthritis; and secondary school teachers trained in teen suicide-intervention. Roundtable participants will provide a distinctly practitioner perspective as they share accounts of their respective inquiries.

## Introduction

At first glance it may be difficult to imagine what could be learned from a discussion involving such diverse populations of adult learners. The participation of each group in a different adult education program provides the context for this dialogue. The respective stories and needs of the learners as expressed in the group interaction, or in one-on-one interviews with the researchers, are compared and contrasted. The sharing of those privileged experiences and the insights gleaned through listening can be valuable learning tools for practitioners as we search for answers, meaning, and guidance in the practice of adult education. It is hoped that the discussion will inform the study of adult education, in particular its application in the realms of mental health, community activism, and professional development. Each presenter's empirical research contributes in some way to issues that arise as we (collectively) focus our attention on various groups in the community.

In the study involving functioning adult schizophrenics, a narrow cognitive aspect of this severe mental illness was addressed as were the social and emotional needs of those afflicted. At the other end of the spectrum, there is a practical and moral dilemma of prescribing skill building for school teachers to make them alert to potentially suicidal students. This ongoing research investigates the application of learning following professional development pertaining to suicide intervention. In the arthritis support group, motivation and participation were key factors examined by the researcher. The student-practitioner looked at the holistic aspects of informal care-giving with the benefit of insights accrued firsthand through years of caring for parents with Alzheimer's.

## Mission Statement

The perspective underlying this presentation is one of the practitioners' commitment to the shaping of community consciousness to foster understanding, cooperation and collaboration among all sectors of society in support of lifelong learning.

## Research Issues and Questions

The research issues to be addressed in this roundtable are: adult learning in diverse contexts; learner empowerment and citizenship; practitioner advocacy for learners in their unique circumstances as well as for adult education; program planning and funding; and assessing

whose needs are being met in adult education programs. Some of the questions to be discussed include: who advocates for and with these groups? Are these programs of value and who determines their value? How can all learners be good citizens in an alienating world? What of the controversy over where government funding for adult education programs should be directed: for example, to marginalized groups such as adults with schizophrenia or mainstream groups such as teachers? Who gets support for adult education in our society and how is this determined? Should government funding be provided to a mainstream group of teachers to educate them about a social issue in their schools and not an academic issue?

## Conclusions

Today, we as educators are attuned to the need for programs for marginalized as well as mainstream groups. We can empower our learners to become self-directed through critical reflection and transformation of meaning schemes not only for themselves but for society as a whole. Inclusivity is paramount. The voices of all learners must be heard for their needs to be validated. Their stories, in their own words, are an example (and a necessary component) of participatory democracy. The target populations in the different research projects indicate that individuals benefit from coming together to address their unique needs. In this sense each one is a social movement. As practitioners, we have a responsibility to advocate on behalf of needy groups in the tradition of the social activist movement in which adult education is rooted. All groups have valid and pressing needs for information and education. Raising individual and collective consciousness can help alleviate or prevent human suffering. As we search for meaning in the practice of adult education, there is an increased awareness that we must work in conjunction with school boards, government agencies, and community organizations to influence policy and thereby ameliorate the pressing needs of society.

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# Learning the Story:
# Toward a Narrative Model of Helping in Rural Communities

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How do people in fields such as education, ministry, nursing, and social work function effectively in rural communities, when the preparation they receive to do so often implies an urban model of the world? To become attuned to the individuals, networks, issues, and traditions within such communities, what sorts of learning are involved for them, both professionally and personally, and what is the influence of such learning on the life of the community they serve?

The aim of the research presented in this session is to seek answers to these questions while developing a model of rural life based on the "narrative root metaphor" (Sarbin, 1986) and related concepts like plot, genre, and theme (Randall, 1995). Such a model is urgently needed in light of demographic changes in Canadian society that profoundly affect the fabric of life in rural communities. As an expression of the "narrative turn" in the human sciences (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997), the model proposed would acknowledge the distinctive narrative environments and "narrative practices" (Gubrium & Holstein, 1998) that can characterize - and problematize - rural life. It would also reflect themes from the "biographical approach" in European adult education (Alheit, Bron-Wojciechowska, Brugger, & Dominicé, 1995) and a range of postmodern perspectives on diversity and power. As well, it would highlight ethical dilemmas (re confidentiality) involved when "outsiders" practice in settings where gossip and rumour abound, or "everyone knows everyone's business". In essence, the model would take seriously the narrative complexity of daily life (Randall, 1995; Clews, 2000); the idea of rural communities as stories (Flynn, 1990); and the narrative dimensions of memory (Neisser & Fivush, 1994), identity (McAdams, 1994), and of knowing and learning (Polkinghorne, 1988).

By means of qualitative interviews with novice and veteran helpers practicing in different communities throughout New Brunswick (one of the most rural Canadian provinces), plus input from members of those communities themselves, the researchers will incorporate into their model the view of helping as essentially a narrative art, as a matter of "co-authoring" and "restorying" lives (Randall, 1996; Kenyon & Randall, 1997). The model will be sensitive to how, through the storytelling that constitutes daily life in a rural community, there is continual reconstruction of the "community narrative" (Banks & Mangan, 1999) by which its members understand their collective past, present, and future. The model will also focus on how helpers go about "learning the story" in a given community; how they view that story through the lenses of their professional narratives, on the one hand, and of their own life stories, on the other; and how the community's "story" itself is transformed in such a complex hermeneutical process. A key aim in developing such a model is to assist helpers with the challenge of cultivating an anti-oppressive and gender inclusive consciousness in rural settings.

In this session, the researchers will outline the four main stages of their research:

*Stage One*

A "drawing board stage" occurred from late 1999 to mid-2000 and involved working with a team of five senior undergraduates to map out the pertinent issues and themes relative to "narrative"

and "helping". An extensive literature search was mounted in a range of fields (e.g., sociology, anthropology, gerontology, psychotherapy, history, and literary theory) with a wide variety of keywords (e.g., gossip, rumour, oral history, friendship, rural, genre, secrecy, genealogy).

*Stage Two*

The researchers will investigate the nature of rural helping, including the interface between formal and informal helping, through semi-structured interviews with 10 informal and 25 formal helpers from a range of disciplines, backgrounds, and communities in New Brunswick. Interviews will also be done with selected members of those communities. Interviewees will be asked about the challenges they encounter in their work and the knowledge and skills they feel is needed to work effectively in rural settings. Attention will be paid to meta-narratives of "rural" that operate among the interviewees.

*Stage Three*

The researchers will endeavour to construct a model of rural helping based on data obtained from Stage Two, drawing on theoretical perspectives emerging from the social sciences which see the central role played by narrative (or stories) in human knowledge and identity, and in personal and social change.

*Stage Four*

The researchers will employ a participatory action research model, involving a multi-disciplinary Advisory Committee, to devise first-level and continuing education curricula for rural helping in a variety of fields that is based on a narrative model. In all of four stages, the researchers will draw on their experiences of "teaching story" - that is, introducing students in social work and gerontology to the conceptual potential of the "narrative root metaphor" (Sarbin, 1986)

Throughout the presentation, the researchers will invite observations regarding the issues their work is exploring and the model it is proposing. They will welcome input concerning the types of skills, qualities, and values required for effective, ethical helping in rural settings - where storytelling is integral to daily life, disciplinary boundaries are routinely obscured, and professional "expertise" must be continually evaluated in the light of local knowledge (Polkinghorne, 1996). At the same time, input will be sought concerning the applicability of such a model of helping in urban settings as well as rural ones.

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# Building Sustainability – Profits and Losses!

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses the introduction of business and management knowledge and skills into the community sector, through an examination of a university management programme targeted at community workers. The research attempts to highlight the programme's contribution to building sustainability and address issues and tensions arising from it.

Sustainability is a term that is gaining increased usage in the community sector. This is in keeping with recent shifts in the voluntary and community sphere, towards a contract culture and the extension of marketing principles (Charities Aid Foundation, 1997). In the UK, the past twenty years has seen a reduction in State provision of welfare services and the "contracting out" of such provision. In search of sustainability and with a mission to improve quality of life in a local area, many community and voluntary groups vie to provide these essential community services. However, they are also part of a wider social movement, committed to tackling social injustice and exclusion (Waddington, 1994). Thus "profit" and "not-for-profit" values sit uneasily beside each other, creating tensions, not only in the sector, but for individual organisations also.

Northern Ireland has a thriving community and voluntary sector, with a recent report indicating that the region has approximately: 5000 voluntary and community organisations; a gross income of approximately £514m; 33,500 paid employees; 79,000 formal volunteers (NICVA, 1998). Most organisations have a "cocktail" of funders, with a substantial proportion of this, stemming initially from Europe. If the peace process continues (and we sincerely hope it does), Objective 1 status will be withdrawn from Northern Ireland in 2005 and we will see a sizeable decrease in funding to the area. Sustainability is clearly an issue therefore, for funders, government and the community/voluntary sector. Whether it has the same meaning for all is not so clear!

This roundtable paper describes a project that was set up to build sustainability in the community sector, through a two-pronged approach, of coaching and training. The Belfast European Partnership Board, an intermediary funding body, undertook consultation with community consortia funded by them, to find out how they could "maximise opportunities for growth and sustainability and to accelerate progress by supporting consortia" (BEPB, 2000). The key set of skills identified were around management of community projects and the University of Ulster designed a programme which would deliver quality training to those working in community consortia who wanted to develop management skills.

The course team consisted primarily of two staff members from the community development unit and one from the Management Institute. The course comprised of seven modules, for which students can gain university credit. On completion of six modules, students can gain a university certificate. In an attempt to facilitate the busy schedules of community workers, each module was delivered over the space of six weeks, with two full day workshops and two further small group tutorial sessions. Distance learning materials were provided to support each module. In May 2000, eighteen students were enrolled onto the programme. In June

2000, the Board indicated that there was demand for an enhanced Diploma version of the course. Eighteen students were enrolled in September 2000 and all students have now been given the opportunity to gain a Diploma. However, due to a range of factors (for example, changing jobs, lack of time, illness, moving abroad), a number of students have been unable to complete the course. There are currently twelve students in each cohort, who are intending to complete the programme and obtain either a Certificate or Diploma.

The purpose of this research is to:

a) evaluate the programme, in terms of its aims to deliver management skills to community sector employees;
b) highlight benefits gained by individuals and organisations;
c) explore issues and tensions regarding the use of business and management culture within the community sector.

Research has been carried out through a series of questionnaires to students and focus group interviews. The next stage of the research is to explore in-depth case studies. The questionnaires and interviews carried out thus far, indicate that the course has been very successful in terms of delivering business and management skills to the community sector. Participants are also very positive in relation to the benefits that these skills and knowledge have brought to them and their organisations. There have been much wider benefits, in terms of capacity building, personal development, enhanced networking and transferable skills. All of the findings to date will be discussed more fully at the Roundtable report.

However, number of questions also arise from this research, which I would like to pose for discussion at the roundtable:

*1)* The issue of different ethos between the profit and not-for profit sector did not appear problematic to participants – they claimed to be able to "filter out" whatever was inappropriate. *Is there a clash of values between these two sectors? Can they easily sit side by side? What enabled participants in this programme to "filter-out" inappropriate material? How did they make their decisions? Did these differ, depending on the individual?*

*2)* Employment in the community sector is precarious, short-term and poorly paid. Those participating in training make many personal sacrifices, frequently juggling work, family and study commitments. They work long and unsociable hours and when they take time out to study, their work is still waiting for them on their return. The knowledge and skills that they gain have benefits for their organisations, as well as the whole community. *How can this potential resource be best supported, in order to maximise the opportunities and benefits arising from it?*

3) We all apparently want to build sustainability – but for whom? – Communities, employees, community groups or funders? Can one approach meet all these needs?

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